

# The CALENDAR *of Modern Letters*

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## The Marmosite's Miscellany.

By JOHN DOYLE.

As I happened one day in a World Exhibition  
I watched a troop of monkeys in a wire cage.  
They seemed little troubled by their cramped condition,  
Agreeing to regard it as a needful stage,  
And not too unhappy, of life's pilgrimage.  
They had monkey nuts in plenty (a nut is a nut)  
And privacy at nightfall when the gates shut.

Among those nimble monkeys, an old Marmosite.  
I knew him at once for a creature of thought.  
He moved a piece of looking-glass in the sunlight,  
And smiled a little sadly as his fellows caught  
At the bright round reflection and scuffled and fought,  
But when he extinguished it with a sly paw,  
Pretended to be tussling for a tassel of straw.

"The critics," I remarked ; "The critics," he agreed.  
"I was a scholar's monkey. I read his books through.  
My reading reminds me how sadly they need  
These constant adventures after something new.  
On us, then, as artists, on myself and you,  
Devolves the dull task of springing the surprise,  
Of aiding their digestions by sharp exercise."

## THE CALENDAR

I was astounded to hear the creature's voice,  
But there at Larissa, that Thessalian town,  
Things happen most oddly by chance or by choice :  
The least confusion shown would prove me a clown.  
I talked to him calmly, I took his words down :  
If any doubt my story, here is proof indeed,  
The monkey's views in long-hand for the world to read.

"How can you bear it, Marmosite, in this cribbed cage,  
Exposed to the gaze of the garrulous crowd ?  
Five minutes for me would provoke such a rage  
I would rattle the bars, I would scream aloud."  
"I earn my living by it," he answered and bowed.  
"I find it no hardship ; after all, I see  
At least as much of mankind as they do of me."

I questioned him further. "Learned Marmosite,  
Confess, are you agnostic, are you atheist,  
Or have you honest faith in any creed or rite ?  
Do arguments amuse you, does the Idealist  
Combating, thrust with twist, the bald Materialist ? "  
He answered : "In Joe Miller recorded we find,  
'What is Mind ? No matter. What is Matter ? Never mind.'

"I am a mere monkey, having no soul,  
But a heart and a head, and they console me much :  
With no immoral appetites to keep in control.  
I read the learned journals in Spanish or Dutch,  
I adorn, may I say ? whatever I touch.  
Theology amuses in my soulless state,  
And I mouth metaphysics early and late.

"I would pour out my musings from A to final Z  
Into your cordial ear were time not so brief—  
The moody machinations of my heated head.  
But one letter even shall afford relief.  
And Truth is not constant, it comes like a thief,  
It blooms for a moment like the wild rose,  
Then storms break above it, and away it goes.

"M shall be the letter to head my confession,  
M stands in the middle of the learned line,  
M is the magistrate of the mental session,  
He titles the triumvirs myself, me and mine,  
He mediates in all things common or divine,  
He stewards the multiplicity of a rich house,  
Mousetraps and muchness, like the Dormouse."

## THE MARMOSITE'S MISCELLANY

"Sing then, merry monkey, of the Muses' choir,  
Of Mormons and Mandarins, of Moll Cut the Purse,  
Of Moses and his Ministry to the Cloud of Fire,  
Of many other matters both better and worse—  
Let them all be threaded and strung in your verse.  
Let *M* be the Movement, the Magnet, the Magician,  
The Monk, the Merry Andrew, the Mathematician."

He said: "I cock my mirror above the cage wires,  
And through the side window what visions I see!  
The whole world of men and their dismal desires,  
Fortune tellers, feather ticklers, the crystal sea,  
Corky angels twanging the tunes of Tennessee,  
Pearly gates, golden streets, a cokernut shy,  
The moral peepshow pandering to the prurient eye.

"I can see men moving in the Great Maze,  
Who reaches the middle expects a rich prize:  
Dead-ends confound them and returning ways.  
Some trust in a system, some close their eyes,  
Some hack at the hedges, some report it wise  
To camp at a crosspath, staunchly to sit,  
'Let the prize come to them, not they to it.'

"Melchizedek had neither father nor mother,  
He was first cartographer of the Great Maze.  
Moses was the next, I read of no other  
Who pierced the holy puzzle in those dark days.  
Melchizedek was mute, but Moses could raise  
Apparitions of the Inmate, a mad Minotaur  
From Horeb's holy mountain his precepts to roar.

"Mnevis in the likeness of a Golden Calf  
Disputing for power with Jehovah the Just,  
Moses takes Mnevis and hews him in half,  
Burns him with charcoal and grinds him to dust.  
The Hebrews drink Mnevis, drink him they must.  
Inwardly rotting, they decline and die.  
Moses was the Minister of the Most High.

"Moloch, Mars, Modo and many more again  
Swore vengeance for Mnevis on Jehovah's power.  
Michael did battle on the Heavenly plain,  
He broke them to rout in a ruinous hour.  
In that Pyrrhic victory fell the fine flower  
Of the guardian angels, without number then,  
Who police the appetites and desires of men.



## THE CALENDAR

" Magic and Mockery sprang up like weeds,  
Obscuring the clean track that Moses had shown.  
Philosophers and poets scattered the seeds  
Of idling and argument, no sooner sown  
Than topping the hedges with buds overblown,  
And flowering into sciences from whose fruit rose  
A race of demi-demons, Jehovah's new foes.

" The Messiah came down as a sweet dispensation  
To redeem the ravages of that Great War.  
He went, as was fittest, to Jehovah's nation  
With a hairy herald trumping before.  
Many a baleful insult this Messiah bore.  
He was a mild martyr where his Father was wroth,  
But Man was a monster, blaspheming both.

" He was the son of Mary, in a manger born ;  
Between two malefactors on a mount He died,  
For the pains of sinful man His heart sadly torn.  
The world must bow and wonder, or woe betide !  
To hear of His humility and the Priests' pride.  
Yet I can view Him calmly in a clearer light :  
The Messiah died for Man and not for Marmosite.

" I met a titled Manchu, a tall Mandarin.  
He intended his sons for a Missionary School.  
He was a pagan rooted in ancestral sin,  
But a man of discernment, no wise a fool.  
He wanted them generals to conquer and rule.  
On the Methodist Mission his heart was long set :  
' The Christians are the boldest with the bayonet.'

" Meekly I enquired of this majestic man :  
' What, sir, do you make of the warring creeds ? '  
In return he asked me, flaunting his fan :  
' What most controls Europe, its desires and needs ? '  
' Jewry,' I responded, ' the hated Jew leads.'  
' Now why does Europe hate him ? ' mused my Manchu,  
' Half worships a Jewess, the other half a Jew.'

" Let us pass to Mahomet, the mouthpiece of God ;  
The Moors and the Mongols know his name well.  
In Arabian Mecca Mahomet's feet trod,  
Superstition trembled when he tolled the bell.  
He unriddled the Maze, his books clearly tell.  
More learned than Moses, more holy than Christ,  
And every honest Mussulman loves sherbet iced.

## THE MARMOSITE'S MISCELLANY

"Of Muggleton, the tailor, and his inward Light !

He stood for the one God, great and unfriended :  
None who came before him had led man aright.

He charted the Maze before he had ended :

What Muggleton ordained could not be amended.

All were duly damned but for one saving grace,  
They must yield to Muggleton the Messiah's place.

"Were I a merry tailor I would bless his commission,  
A staunch Muggletonian, true to my trade.

With state or with church I would make no condition,  
In the public pillory chanting unafraid :

On my dumb tailor's goose his hand would be laid,  
To testify in Latin, to glory and groan,

*'Quam verus propheta Lodowick Muggleton.'*

"The Mormons bear witness to the golden plates,

To the glasses of crystal set on Smith's nose.

Mormon and Mosiah guiding their fates,

They made the salt Wilderness bloom like the rose,

They had little mercy on their Gentile foes.

They massacred their warriors once and again,

The Midianite militia on the parched plain.

"Morgan was a Buccaneer on the Spanish Main,

Vice-Admiral to Mansvelt of the pirate fleet ;

Mansvelt was murdered, beginning Morgan's reign.

He was a fierce fighter, he knew no defeat,

He delighted in torture, he drank arrack neat,

He captured Panama with its jewels and plate,

But made small pretension to prophetic state.

"Mull'd Sack was a rogue deserving the Wreath.

He began chimney sweeper at Mary-le-Bow,

He picked Cromwell's pocket upon Hounslow Heath ;

But thence to Cologne, little favour to show,

He robbed from King Charles all his bags at a blow.

His mistress, a merchant's wife, lived in Mark's Lane.

He pretended no piety, his plunders were plain.

"Moll-Cut-the-Purse was Mercury's bitch,

Prostitute, procuress, pickpocket, thief ;

On the spoils of the public she grew very rich,

Wasting no time in repentance and grief.

A pipe of tobacco was her joy in chief.

Morgan, Mull'd Sack and this Moll-Cut-the-Purse

Dishonoured the prophets, but died none the worse.

## THE CALENDAR

" In the Middle Ages it was *memento mori*.

*Vivere memento* is the modern cry.

' *We all are one kindred* ' was the old story, '

The struggle for Existence gives that the lie,

Competition is loud at the Cokernut shy.

What with Marx and Malthus and the Millionaires,

The Angel of Death has been kicked down the stairs.

" Movements are judged by their monied results ;

The days of Revelation are not yet done.

The Middle West and Manchester welcome new cults,

Mary Baker Eddy enjoys a rich run,

There are millions to be made in a new form of fun,

Uncovering a cypher, say, in Matthew or Mark

For the sacrifice of bull-calves in the pitch dark."

" Mischievous monkey, do not tell me more.

What further you imagine, I do not dare to think.

Have you, then, no principles to praise and adore ?

Is folly your food, and is laughter your drink ? "

He answered me gravely, without a smile or blink :

" Go-cart in the Lexicon has an honoured place,

Being next after *God*, with a lien on His Grace.

" Principles I have, but only one or two,

Firm enough foundation for a busy mind.

First to reverence God, but not from any pew ;

No Frankenstein monster of a furious mind.

If God be Omnipotent, can a creature find

Satisfaction in serving a Classification,

A singling out of qualities, God in separation ?

" Next, to myself and my neighbours at once

I owe this respect without favour or fear,

That he may be a doctor, I a mere dunce,

He may be a pauper, a Pope, or a peer,

But unless as an equal I shall not go near.

I will not kiss his great toe except he kiss mine,

Nor swell in self-importance at his flattering whine.

" Between good and evil I strive not to judge

Between the savage tyrant and the martyred saint ;

Between vice and innocence, frankness and fudge,

Courage and cowardice, wrath and restraint,

I avoid when I can black tar and white paint,

Reiterating always, in a sad sing-song,

' Wherever there is conflict, all sides are wrong.'



## THE MARMOBSITE'S MISCELLANY

"I meet such demands as are honestly made,  
Unless these demands in themselves conflict,  
For then I meet none, I lie in the shade  
Till the dances are over or the posies picked ;  
And when my neighbour wrongs me, at once I am strict  
To root from my own heart the cause of offence :  
For where there is conflict can there be innocence ?

"The maunderings of the maniac signifying nothing  
I hold in respect ; I hear his tale out.  
Thought comes often clad in the strangest clothing.  
So Kekulé, the chemist, watched the weird rout  
Of eager atom-serpents winding in and out,  
And walzing tail to mouth ; in that absurd guise  
Appeared benzene and anilin, their drugs and their dyes.

"The Moon is the Mistress of escape and pity,  
Her regions are portalled by an ivory gate.  
There are fruit-plats and fountains in her silver city,  
With honeysuckle hedges where true lovers mate,  
With undisputed thrones where beggars hold state,  
With smooth hills and fields where in freedom may run  
All men maimed and manacled by the cruel sun.

"Her madness is musical, kindly her mood,  
She is Dian no more when the sun quits the skies,  
She is the happy Venus of the hushed wood.  
So artless Actaeon may banquet his eyes  
At the crisp hair curling on her naked thighs,  
At her shapely shoulders, her breasts and her knees,  
She will kiss him pleasantly under tall trees."

### PART II.

"You ask me of the Muses. What shall I say ?  
To talk of my friends is no easy affair.  
They treat me, be sure, in a cousinly way ;  
I coax them, I tease them, I tangle their hair.  
Melpomené, my favourite, finds me a chair.  
She tempts me with tit-bits in a tasty row.  
I am like a learned parrot she loved long ago.

"Often I mock them, 'you mannerly minxes,  
The way you dress for drawing-rooms makes me laugh loud.  
To see your flowing skirts, your front like the Sphinx's.  
You stop your fine noses at the foetid crowd.  
I flush and I tremble to see you so proud.'  
'Aristotle has invited us to afternoon tea.  
You are jealous, my marmosite,' smiles Melpomené.

## THE CALENDAR

" Last night as the Muses and I sat together,  
Conversing in riddles from reason remote,  
I begged pretty Pegasus for a wing feather,  
I cut it to a quill and in a book wrote.  
Melpomené was drowsy, she took little note.  
Then a copy of *Erewhon* on the table near  
Provoked me to the poem in parts you shall hear.

" I title it *The Safe, Erewhon Redivivus*,  
The odd phantasmagoria of a restless night.  
We poets drift about where the mad winds drive us ;  
We shoot our urgent arrows far out of sight,  
Only when we find them can we guess their flight.  
This, then, is Samuel Butler, moving alive,  
Vicariously nerved in nineteen twenty-five.

### THE SAFE, OR EREWHON REDIVIVUS.

" *I was dreaming a dream that was not of Merry May,  
With Flora and Venus and white lambs at play.  
Nor yet of plague and famine, oil wells aflame.  
But across a world in little,  
An arras strained and brittle,  
The rending progression of an angry Name.*

" *Blunden wore the sunset hues of a stranded bream,  
A shoal of Oxford minnows followed upstream,  
Edward Marsh was poised on the edge of a sofa,  
Hardy dribbled his umbrella,  
Belloc danced a tarantella,  
Aldous Huxley juggled up a skull and a loafah.*

" Then I wrote of Bridges and the English tongue,  
He reported it furry, prescribing a purge ;  
How Lawrence, with dark robes of destiny hung,  
Defied the volcano from its deadly verge ;  
How Wells tramped Utopia with ambitious urge ;  
How, far in the background, a great scarp up-reared  
For Doughty, the old bard, with owls in his beard.

" Then of Masfield, astride on his notable nag,  
Its name was Right Royalty, out of Grand Slam ;  
Of Bennett eating ortolans from a paper bag ;  
Of Davies at play with a lodging-house lamb ;  
Of Shaw's manifestos signed with ' I am.'  
And ' Yonder blandly blinking in the warm sunshine,  
Little David Garnett, a cage-mate of mine.'



## THE MARMOSITE'S MISCELLANY

" But, O, the Fitzwilliam, and, O, Samuel Butler,  
Subtlest of writers, by death made subtler,  
He's bequeathing a safe from the Musical Banks,  
And Mr. Sydney Cockerell,  
To whom I dedicate this doggerel,  
Is accepting it with thanks.

" No knob here nor handle, keyhole nor key,  
Butler has vanished with a gleam of glee ;  
' Open Sesame, Open Lilies ' ; they did no such thing.  
The bearded curators  
And literary spectators  
Drone : ' Ichabod, Ichabod, ' in the voice of Dean Inge.

" Follows discussion and Gossip and trouble,  
Babel and lobby-talk, confused hubbly bubble.  
Force the lock, how, why ? Why not, or whether ?  
But Messrs. Ellis and Yeats  
Observed two curious copper plates,  
Which Mr. Gosse slid back with an oiled goosa-feather.

" Two keyholes were revealed  
By these covering plates concealed.  
With tantalising promise for futurity,  
Sir Sydney's Colvin and Lee  
Raised up a mottled calf to see ;  
Which, peering in, remarked on a profound obscurity.

" Keyless, but not hopeless, even at this impasse,  
The faithful murmured rapidly, Ça passe, Ça passe, Ça passe !  
(Here I apologise for a somewhat sleepy rhyme)  
While Mr. Lytton Strachey,  
With his skeleton latchkey,  
Picked first one lock, then t'other, in less than no time.

" We rushed, pushed, looked in—but as I saw myself,  
Not even a camphor marble on a bottom shelf,  
Not even a torn sheet of an empty note-book found,  
Until T. S. Eliot, from an upper bracket,  
Pulled down a stud and a dusty ping-pong racquet,  
And Joyce pinged one on the other with a dismal sound.

" I rose at the noise of this priapic pinging,  
Tom-toms beaten distantly for Handelian singing.  
Then the voice of Middleton Murry  
Said ' He ought to have looked higher, '  
And the voice of J. C. Squire  
Came blurred and thick and furry.

## THE CALENDAR

*The disciples of Freud  
Were quite overjoyed  
At this typical bit  
Of tendency wit ;  
The disciples of Jung  
All put out their tongue  
At this symbolological misfit.*

*Where are the straighteners that Erewhon prophasies ?  
Analyse, gentles, analyse !  
Fish for the Society's annual prize."*

" Melpomené caught up the poem to read.  
Down she threw it, furious. And at once I said :  
It is nonsense, dear mistress, nonsense indeed,  
Obscure, local, spiteful, not to be read ;  
But if you destroy it, I swear by Pope's head  
I'll burn your long bookshelves of Augustan verse,  
No duller than mine are, written much worse."

" She pinched my ear for me, saying all was well,  
But forbade me to trespass on her good will.  
Apollo would curse me, candle, book and bell,  
If I could not study to control my quill :  
He would banish me for ever from their high hill.  
I heard her lecture out, I took it in good part,  
But Apollo, I knew well, is divided at heart.

" His people are stiff-necked, steely their hearts,  
Holding pure Helycon in the lowest scorn ;  
Square-headed merchants of practical parts.  
And where is the poet ? in what city born ?  
Shall charm them with lute string or rouse them with horn,  
To delight in abstractions or in high-flung thought ?  
With what hook let down is Leviathan caught ?

" We serve a lost cause : does any pride remain  
In prolonging tradition beyond its due time,  
Giving it lip-service, mumbling and vain,  
With a measured metre and expected rhyme ?  
Morning and evening our ancient bells chime,  
Yet the whole congregation could sit in one pew,  
The sexton, the verger, and old folk one or two.

## THE MARMOSITE'S MISCELLANY

"Then while our dead church is not yet disendowed,  
While I still am preacher and the pulpit's wide,  
I shall roar what I will to the sprinkled crowd,  
Shall drive them hobbling forth aghast and horrified.  
The noise of my hurricane shall be heard outside.  
There are many young lost things passing our way  
Who will turn in to listen, and, puzzled, stay.

"The beginning of wisdom is laughter and song,  
The furtherance of wisdom, scholarship and groans.  
Between first and second, reactions are strong ;  
The disputants wrangle in no playful tones,  
Dream against waking, blood against bones :  
Let poetry, then, enter on its third degree,  
In grammar of unreason marching close and free."

At this point the monkey paused in his speech,  
Breaking off short half-way through a line.  
Squatting in a corner he began to reach  
For the small of his back, why, I could not divine.  
"A flea," he informed me, "an old friend of mine.  
He knows there's no comfort in this life to match  
Sunshine, sleep, solitude and a good scratch."

This was a gentle hint, I must go on my way ;  
He was quietly scratching and settling for sleep.  
I raised my hat to him, he grunted "Good Day,"  
So curled at his corner, in a hairy heap ;  
Soon his quick breathing came steady and deep.  
Then the sounder he slept, the more wakeful grew I :  
Till up rose the red sun in the Eastern sky.

### TAIL PIECE.

A sniff at every flask  
And a lick at every stopper :  
In these quick days, in this old maze  
It is neither just nor proper.

Neither just nor proper  
For more than this to ask :  
A lick at every stopper,  
And a sniff at every flask.



## THE CALENDAR

### NOTES.

STANZA 4.—See Apuleius' *Golden Ass* : *The Story of Thelyphron*.

STANZA 6.—This generation is curiously unaware of Joe Miller's one-time pre-eminence as the father of Jests and god-father of Chestnuts. The recent early-Victorian revival might have made capital here.

STANZA 15.—Modo. The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman. Modo he's called, and Mahu. *King Lear*.

STANZA 22.—Lodowick Muggleton, born 1609, died 1697. He enjoyed a numerous following about the times of the Civil War, His works, among them *Milk for Babies*, were burnt by the common hangman.

STANZA 24.—*The Book of Mormon* and text-books of American military history.

STANZA 25.—Morgan's feat at Panama was remarkable. With only twelve hundred men he defeated the Spanish Governor at the head of two squadrons of horse, four regiments of foot, and a great number of wild bulls driven by Indian slaves.

STANZA 26.—See Caulfield's *Remarkable Persons*. Mull'd Sack's baptismal name was John Cottington; hanged at Smithfield in 1659, after a prosperous career.

STANZA 27.—Mary Frith, an associate of Mull'd Sack. An old print has this motto:—

“ See here the Presidess of the pilfering trade,  
Mercury's second, Venus's only maid.”

STANZA 38.—

“ Melpomene, that fair maid, she burnished my beak.  
I pray you let Parrot have liberty to speak.”

Skelton's *Speak Parrot*.

STANZA 41 *et seq.*—*The Safe* was first published in the *Winter Owl*. I reprint it here by courtesy of Mr. Graves, the editor, to whom I owe two other acknowledgments. In one of his critical books I found the quotation from Skelton that suggested this Melpomene passage; in another a reference to a letter by Samuel Butler, in which occurs “to a lexicographer God is merely the next word after Go-cart.”

*The Safe* is an attempt to use the mechanism of the fantastic dream with all its absurd interlacing themes for the purpose of a satiric history of contemporary events. These themes may be particularised as follows.

The principal one is given in the introductory stanza, the development in 1925 of Butler's critical method. The Safe from the Musical Banks occurs in *Erewhon*, and around it there is continuation of the struggle that Butler's restless and ingenious mind

## THE MARMOSITE'S MISCELLANY

carried on with the critics of his day, whom he accused of deliberately obscuring the truth. The Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge possesses many Butler relics, though not so many as the Library of St. John's College at the same University, which can show a wide range of very personal *Butleriana*, from his paint-box to his kettle-holder. The stud and ping-pong racquet refer partly to this.

Another theme interwoven is the state of poetry in 1925. Mr. Blunden's fish poems, of which he has written many, are linked up with the *London Mercury* school of poetry and criticism, the *Mercury* having been first published at Bream's Buildings. There are many similar plays on words in the piece. Open Sesame, Open Lilies, refers to Butler's quarrel with Ruskin; the "arras strained and brittle" hides a reference to the Arras fighting; in which Mr. Blunden himself took part, and is equivalent to the strained post-war structure of Society and Literature. Mr. Blunden is taken as representative of the best of this *London Mercury* school; his ruralities are, perhaps, a form of war-convalescence as opposed to the mere fatuity of his imitators. He is the one big fish in that stream of Natural History verse; the undergraduate contributors to Mr. Squire's journal are mere minnows in comparison, but the sunset hues suggest that Mr. Blunden is the last dying glory of the party, and at the time of writing Mr. Blunden is on a foreign strand. Mr. Marsh poised on the edge of a sofa, as the author once saw him in a Society drawing-room, represents the Georgian movement poised between the soft cushions of tradition and the hard floor of modernism.

Messrs. Ellis and Yeats' enquiry, sincere, but largely negative in result, into the meaning of Blake's Prophetic Books is recollected; engraved plates are associated in Jewish, Mormon and other religions with sacred mystery, but Blake's copper-plate cover-designs to the Prophetic Books are particularly referred to. Sir Sidney's Colvin and Lee have both recently been assailed, whether justly or not I do not know, as obscurers of literary truth. Sir Sidney Lee for his treatment of Shakespeare's Sonnets (Butler quarrelled with him over this very thing), and Sir Sidney Colvin for his treatment of Keats' and Robert L. Stevenson's early debauches. The mottled calf suggests literary scholarship; the raising up of a calf is a Biblical reminiscence, and emblematic of setting up a false god; there is also a side reference to Mr. Lee's nationality. Mr. Lytton Strachey, whose *Queen Victoria* and *Eminent Victorians* are books that Butler would have much enjoyed, won his successes by a bold research in sacrosanct records, such as the Greville Memoirs, which had hitherto been kept locked away from the public. Messrs. Strachey, Eliot and James Joyce are, in the author's opinion, Samuel Butler's literary and critical heirs; but a lot of things have changed since Butler's death; these are typified by the Negroid influence in art and music and the sex obsession which to-day

characterise the *enfant terrible* school which Butler founded. Judged from a modern standpoint, Butler was fairly conventional in his æsthetic tastes. In music Handel was his hero : he gave him the same pre-eminence as he gave Shakespeare in dramatic poetry. The end of *The Safe* refers to Butler's prophecy of the psycho-analytic movement ; his "straighteners" of *Erewhon*, an absurdity to 1872, are now a common feature of professional life. Perhaps, were Butler alive now, his would be the sort of mind to set in order the extravagance of the Central European School of psycho-analysis, as in his scientific books, *Luck or Cunning ?* and *Life and Habit*, he soundly criticised the detail of Darwin's evolutionary theory. The last lines of the poem contain a defiance both to the new psychologists and to the Georgians, whom the author invites to fish for the Society's annual prize, presumably the Hawthornden Prize, which has been awarded to two or three Georgians ; Georgians hate dream-analysis in any form.

Note the "gentles," which are piscatorially intended. The reference to the Poet Laureate is to his admirable work with the Society of Pure English : it is not generally known that Doctor Bridges was once in practice as a physician. Other references to Messrs. Shaw, Doughty, Bennett, D. H. Lawrence, Davies, Masfield, need little explanation. David Garnett is a "cage-mate" partly, but not entirely, on account of the *Man in the Zoo*.



## Three Tales.

By LEONID LEONOV.

### I.

"IT'S easy to die," said Prokor Stafiev, "easy and not bitter. There's no taste in death. It's neither bitter nor sweet."

The strangers from the flying camp turned their heads toward the old man, somewhat perplexed. Yuda even said jokingly, in a subdued voice, but with the intention of being overheard by Prokor:

"Grandpa is talking nonsense!"

But Prokor, with his upright palm, stroked his white beard, yellowing with age, and explained not loudly but distinctly:

"A man is like a flower. As soon as he is born, he begins to die. He is dying all his life, losing part of his bloom from day to day. He is born just to die," and Prokor quietly laughed at the open mouth of one of the flying camp soldiers, who was listening with attentive astonishment. "A man is like a flower! And as soon as his eyes get tired of looking at the clear light, they won't want much more light themselves. It's even curious to watch how it happens! And one wouldn't think of jumping off then. . . ."

"Why, you're lying about that, Uncle Prokor," said Yuda, lighting his cigarette from a smoking ember. His lips became thin all at once. "I witnessed a case which was quite the reverse. . . ."

The night promised to be long, and the gruel had not started boiling. Efim Suponiev, appointed cook by unanimous vote the first night, was stirring the gruel with a wooden spoon, and damning the heat. There was no need of persuading Yuda to tell his story. Tugging at his Caucasian leather belt, he started it himself.

### ABOUT THE HAND IN THE WINDOW.

It was Siberian weather.

We were being driven by trainloads from sea to sea. It happened last year. One day the commissar came to see us.

## THE 'CALENDAR

"Finish up your affairs with the women if you've had anything to do with 'em. To-morrow we're leaving the bread of Vologda."

Our battery moves quickly. Early in the morning we put our guns on the vamps and set off for the station. It was freezing. We got a whole cattle truck : we put the horses in the front part of it, and occupied the back part ourselves. There were four of us who rode the horses. We mixed well, and were particularly lively about women and drink. We stayed at the station for two days, and then pulled out across the snows.

It happened on the 18th of December. I remember it as if it were happening now. We were going merrily on ; we had a fire and light, while outside there was snow, snow. . . . The days were windy. The air creaked in the night. Of course, women brightened our soldiers' nights too. At times some of them insisted : "Take us in, take us in, please !" Or, "I want to go to my husband !" Or, "I want some bread !" We would come to the door, all four of us : "Aren't you afraid to come into our sleeping-car ? There are four of us here !" All of them had the same answer : "Well, brother, we can't get out of our woman's skin ! Such is our lot !" "Well, if such is your lot—get in !" It's a matter of fact, of course, that a soldier is the world's first tom-cat, or as we say, a man of free life !

Once we drove up to a station. The evening was frosty. The snow was falling as if it were being measured : falling and then stopping for a while, then falling again and again stopping. The engine slowed up to take in water. Two of our bunch slipped off to steal some firewood for the stove. I woke up and went out. "What's the name of this station ?" I asked. They said something like "Bulykay." I couldn't understand, not being quite awake. The train came up somewhat closer, and all sorts of riff-raff began to besiege us.

One old man, a robust devil, nearly tried to start a fight. "Let me in !" he shouted, and knocked at the door with his crutch, making an awful racket. "I want to die down in the warm meadows ! I have a right to ! I was a saviour of my country !" And how can you explain to a deaf old man that relics have no right to go by train ? One of us,

### THREE TALES

Aristark—what a joker he was—went up to him and said, “Run along, father, or I’ll eat you!” The old man twitched his beard to and fro. “You can’t eat me!” he shouted. “It won’t be allowed! I’m a servant of my country! I have three medals and a cross!” Aristark answered, “The country isn’t our affair, but the medals, now—you can sell ’em if they’re silver, and drink to our health!”

Little old women poked themselves into the car, too. We sent them away with the same speed. What fat can you get off old meat?

Suddenly two women approached us. They seemed to be Jewish. The mother had faint moustaches, but seemed quite all right. And the daughter—a young girl—was very pleasant looking, thin, like a spring. There was something playful about her nose. The moon rose at that moment, and I could seem them both very clearly. And the main thing was that they had nothing with them except a small bundle carried by the mother, and a small case by the daughter.

“Won’t you let us in,” they said, “just to go as far as the next station?” and they gave the name of some town. I was standing near-by scratching my chest, just as I am now. But Aristark found the young girl appealing. “Get in, get in!” he said. “There’s a horsy smell in our parlour-car, but it’ll run without stopping . . . and it’s warm!” He flung the door wide open, and let all the heat out.

I went up to him. “Why do you decide this matter without asking our opinion?” I said. “We must discuss it as a Collective!” But he gave me a wink: “You’ll be satisfied! Don’t interfere!”

He dragged them into the sleeping car himself, the daughter more gently, but he pulled the mother with such a jerk that she fell headlong, poor woman. . . . Our Aristark was a joker!

A moment after we took them in, a schoolboy in a grey coat ran up to us. He was about sixteen; he had a small bag on his back. He pushed his hand through the half-opened door, and wouldn’t let us shut it. He said he had to get some bread. His mother or his sister was dying of hunger—I forgot who exactly. He was shivering violently, like a beaten woman. “Le-e-t me in!” We laughed at him a little—wasn’t he just too hasty, though!



## THE CALENDAR

We just had time to light our stove when the train started. The weather was stormy out in the fields—snow, whistling wind, and moonlight—but inside our car it was really warm. I never felt so cosy as in this sleeping car, never in my life. And there was some vague sweet feeling in my soul. I went to the window. “How round the little moon looks,” I thought, “why does she stick up there, the little fool?”

Then I saw a hand in a grey sleeve, without a glove, the hand of the schoolboy, on the iron railing behind the window-pane. I understood—the boy hadn’t been able to resist putting his foot on the projecting part of the doorstep, and was hanging outside. We had a sleeping car of the “Crimean type,” as our men called it jokingly. Well, was it our affair? Since we couldn’t drive him away, let him hang on. . . .

I started to chop some wood with my sabre. Aristark offered his bed to the mother, and sat down near the daughter on a log, starting some small talk: where she came from, what her name was, what she had in her case, and so on. The young girl looked questioningly at her mother at first, but afterwards she grew more confident. She opened her case—she had a violin in it that looked like herself—so meagre and thin, and with a little nose. . . .

“So you can play?” said Aristark, half closing his eyes, like a cat. “That’s very good—a romance, for instance. Our Petrov there plays the balalaika, and it doesn’t seem bad, though may be that’s just our ignorance.”

“Well, you won’t be ignorant any more,” the girl laughed. “Everything is going to be better now—there will be general education!”

“Oh, no,” said Aristark; “you can read books, but we’ll eat cucumbers!”

The young girl with the violin only laughed and rubbed her little nose with her handkerchief.

After talking with her in this friendly way, Aristark went to the horses’ mangers, where it was dark, and called us there. “Let’s have some matches,” he said, “and draw lots who’s to begin first.” We threw four matches into a cap; Ivan had to draw for Petruka.

Petruka, meanwhile, had to sit with the girl to keep her from growing weary. Of course, Petruka was not much of a

### THREE TALES

conversationalist, so he persuaded her to play the violin. We had hardly drawn the matches—I got the first turn—when we heard the sound coming toward us. I sprang out and stood puzzled: the girl was playing the violin and looking at the red charcoal in the little stove. The sound was simple and tender, and took hold of your soul. I sat down on a clump of wood. “Let’s wait,” I thought, “until she finishes.” We’re taught from childhood to be patient. . . .

What things weren’t in that music? You could believe that roses were blooming in front of your eyes, or something else, pleasant and round. The woman with moustaches was already snoring, but the girl kept on playing, as airily as if she were fluttering. I sat there like a shelled egg, didn’t dare move my hand, feeling quite ashamed. And that little violin was so fragile—you could crush it with a finger—and such a sound! I suddenly felt outraged, and nearly cried. I jumped off my seat and ran back to Aristark. He was standing there quietly, and his face was white, like a shaken-up bottle with the dregs on the surface. At that moment we crossed a bridge, and the bridge rattled.

“She’s playing this about me,” Aristark whispered to me, but I hardly heard him; my own face was turned inside out, too.

Suddenly something drew me to the window. I went to it and saw that the iron railing was still there, but the hand was gone. . . .

She played on to us all the way to the next station. I felt more offended than anybody else, of course. . . . The wind outside was violent. It burnt one’s skin through the chinks.

\* \* \*

“She played out of cunning,” said Andrushka Podpratov.

“She wanted to reproach us,” added Yuda himself.

“A good-for-nothing girl, and she made the men weep!” said Efim Suponiev, pouring some melted fat into the gruel.

“The boy jumped off, did he?” asked Prokor Stafiev, after a little while.

“Yes, jumped off!” mockingly snapped back Yuda, and a flush of anger spread over his cheeks.

In the shrubs, near the border of the forest, a night-bird

## THE CALENDAR

was shrieking. There was something in the bird's cries that made one pull one's eyebrows together and fix one's gaze on any trifling object in sight.

"The gruel is ready!" announced the cook, licking up the wooden spoon, from which an appetising steam was rising.

And all the second day the axes were never silent. It began at dawn. The wood-pecker saw the sun above his head, and struck with his beak. The axes answered him from below with the same knock. And people again dug the earth, going further into their wilderness. Before the evening came, two of the thirty frameworks that had been planned before, were fixed to the ground, and a hidden observation-post was arranged in the hollow of a burnt oak tree.

### II.

Again the men were spending the night near a large fire. Luka Begunov was appointed to be cook the second night. He blinked with his drooping eyelids, then suddenly declared that he could not cook gruel, but porridge: he said he was not accustomed to cook gruel. Nobody objected. The conversation shifted from women to the town. Mishka Zibanda was hewing a pole a little way off. On hearing one of the exclamations, he stuck his axe into a fallen fir tree, and coming up nearer, started to speak:

#### ABOUT A LITTLE GERMAN GIRL—DUNIA.

I used to live in Petersburg as a coachman—it was a gay time!

My father had a business. He was rich. He used to send his drivers off in two lots, by turns—he hardly had room enough to keep all his horses. We used to drive all sorts of rotten people, but they were rich, and sometimes paid us fifty roubles one way! I was my father's only son, and he spared me. I grew up on free bread. I started doing joiner's work, but my laziness got the better of me. I never could fit one piece of wood into another. Well, naturally, I had an amusing time away from home. Women used to call me "angel," because of my hair. That's true. I like hair—it adds to a man's appearance!

But on reaching his twenty-fourth year, this "angel" began to like drink too much. That summer Kyriak, the



### THREE TALES

eldest coachman, left us. He had sat on the box of my father's carriages for fifteen years ! That evening is as clear to me as if it were now. My father was saying his prayers when I came home from a fancy dress ball, dressed up like a red devil, and drunk. My father knew little about my affairs. A wild thought entered my mind : to go into my father's room through the window, just as I was. I threw off my overcoat in the courtyard, opened the window without sound, stepped inside, and growled. My father made his last bow in prayer, and then came up to me. I growled still more, but he seized me, you see, at the place where the belly whiskers start to grow. It was a very unsuccessful trick, but I thought I'd fall into a fit laughing. He tore the devil's mask off my face, and tried to strike me. . . . A very unsuccessful joke, to tell the truth !

The next day he took me down to the stables. I thought he was going to beat me, and put a little weight into my pocket, intending it for him. But he said : " Now, you're going to be a coachman. Bring me five roubles a day—the rest is yours." I bowed to his feet, according to custom : " Thank you, father. You see, I intended doing some injury to myself. I've been nearly eaten up by my own uselessness ! " He called me a fool for that, and laughed. He was a nice old man, and a good friend of two archbishops in Petersburg. " Choose a horse for yourself " he said. I chose old Kyriak's horse, Kudyar. He was a mottled stallion, with a curly tail and a curly mane, and was a very good goer. General Elizarov once took a photograph of Kudyar's legs and hung it on the wall of his room. Kyriak had driven Kudyar only for one year. . . .

What a fine little horse he was ! He wasn't afraid of fire or water ! Harness rises a foot on the backs of some horses, but it lay on Kudyar as if it were sewn to him. However, he was afraid of tickling—you couldn't lay a hand on him. What more can I say ? I drove him without a whip ! That was the kind of horse I drove when I first set off for the old places where Kyriak used to go.

I used to drive a doctor on Sergevskya Street, house No. 59. Also a baroness by the name of Kil. She couldn't bend her back, the witch, and had a very small head : if you'd put a

thimble on it, there wouldn't be room left for a needle. She liked to jog-jog very slowly—was afraid of scattering her bones. Finally I got sick of driving them. The doctor liked to go a mile an hour, too. Goes and bows all the time, trying to be "chic." And that anchovy . . . I felt as if I were becoming as rascally as themselves, and took up night work.

I must say, I used to dress very well in those days. I always had on a starched collar and shirt-front, and so on, a watch, of course, and a Persian belt, because a belt is the principal thing for a coachman, as well as for a gypsy. On cold days the starched shirt-front was not visible, of course ; however, my position required it. I didn't deny myself food—sometimes I ate better than the people I drove. Certainly, good living makes one's soul alert and merry. By the way, we had a remarkable coach for Kudyar, brought from Vienna, of the best make, price five hundred roubles, varnished cover, metal rings . . . it was a beauty to look at !

One night I stood near the Peterhof restaurant with my coach. Suddenly two people came out. He was a puppy, a low little beast, and quite drunk. His miserable little hat came down to his nose, and his face ! . . . you'd think someone had been sitting on it all night ! But she was a small young lady, so alert, with a little flame in her. . . . "Can you drive ?" she asked. I answered that I could even fly. She said : "Fly then, Mikulay, to the Isles !" Why Mikulay, when I was christened Michael, I don't know. But a coachman must not be too sensitive. She shoved her puppy in by the hand. "Go !" she said to me. I only shook the reins a little—our horses were famous—they could go !

It was a trifle for Kudyar to take them as far as the Isles. The young lady liked it. She evidently was a little German. "You drive well, Mikulay !" she said. I felt offended. "Why," I said, "do you think we have no soul because we've got to be dumb at our job ? Praise God, we used to drive Stolypin himself !" Then she drew out a visiting-card. "Take that card," she said, "I'll engage you again !" and was gone. I put the card in my breast-pocket, and forgot it there. Well, there was nothing to look at. I knew that her job was not a free one, either, that she had no name of her own—a litter for gentlefolk—nothing else.

### THREE TALES

In this way I became acquainted with her. She really was a little German, Dunia by name. She lived with her sister, providing everything for her, clothing and footwear. Her sister was really not a fool, but somehow had not enough brains to live by. They lived poorly, in the hotel Montekarlovo. All their property consisted of was a little white dog and a large wardrobe. But they were very friendly to each other !

About seven times I drove her with her puppy. The puppy was the son of a house-owner of Kirochnaya Street. His father had a pin business, but somehow succeeded in building a huge house for himself—really a large cloud ! But at least she blew all his money out of him. I alone used to take fifty roubles for a one-way trip.

Then a wood merchant took a fancy to Dunia. Vedenev was his name—a stern devil. He was small, and wore a gold pince-nez. He owned barges that carried wood, and liked good driving. He paid good money for it. Dunia spent one night and he spent—probably four barges of wood. I made some profit out of him, too, though I had no right to it.

About this time Dunia began to win my heart. I felt melancholy, couldn't sleep at night, dragged myself about the house—quite mad. Once I even whipped Kudyar, what for I don't remember myself. I worried all the time because she was not honest. But if she were honest, I'm sure I wouldn't have been so attracted by her. I loved Kudyar as if he were my own brother. I'd like to go to his stable and beg his pardon—it would be the right thing to do !

How many of them I drove during the year ! By sledge and in the coach. After the wood-merchant came the tall lamp-post. He dealt in coke, used to supply factories with coke. He was a very peculiar gentleman ; he had about two pounds of hair on him. After him came a little officer ; that one paid poorly, nothing higher than the ten rouble red notes. I drove him only for the sake of my soul ; perhaps it would be put to my credit in the other world ! Dunia, I knew, was ashamed to look at me. When she went out with him, she used to turn her head away, as if she were looking at the pigeons. The little officer, however, had money enough only for three times. . . .



## THE CALENDAR

Then the war began. Dunia began to dress herself in a sister-of-mercy's costume. It was more profitable for her. To me she became as dear as one of my own people. Evidently I loved her—you can't look inside your own head, or ask your own heart! Sometimes I stood at her gate at night, trembling and seeing everything that went on behind the walls. Seeing how she undressed herself behind a screen, and he sat waiting and smoking a cigarette. Kudyar alone knew my tortures, but he was not talkative—the cob!

Then Dunia took a student as a lover. I used to drive the students and knew them. They are tall fellows, tilt their caps rakishly, and seem brave. When one of them sat in a coach, you felt as if you were driving a pumpkin. But this one seemed petticoated—he walked as if he were stuffed with oats. A little beast! And he wore a small glass in his eye. I must say, somehow I felt insulted by the sight of that little glass: my knees trembled when I looked at it! I saw at once by Dunia's humble manner that she had fallen in love with him. That love ate all the fire out of her. She had lived feeling herself very weak and insignificant, thinking there was nobody in the world weaker than herself. But meeting someone who seemed to need pity even more than she did, she fluttered! Then I became wild too—started to gamble deeply and to drink more deeply. In three weeks I wasted all I had saved before.

But very soon I began to notice that she was paying the bills everywhere, and that he was pretending he had left his purse at home. And at the same time he tried to appear "chic," the beast! There was a restaurant on the Isles, a ship floating on the water. It was called Bellevue, and there was water around it. About three thousand coachmen used to stand there at night, and all of them could earn their bread. I saw that the student had his head turned. Coming out of the Bellevue, he used to shout at her, and poke his finger into my shoulder. I trembled all over, but Dunia whispered in my ear, "Be quiet, Mikulay . . . that's nothing, Mikulay!" And imagine what she brought me to—I became meeker than a gelding: I only stared at them, and tortured Kudyar at the stables in secret. . . .

It lasted three months. Once I was driving them and

### THREE TALES

listening to their talk. There were fields around us; the moon looked like the yoke of an egg—quite an indecent sight! The student said to Dunia: "Don't take anybody else as a lover, but wait for me!" She answered him in a very low voice, so that I shouldn't hear: "If you are worrying about the money I gave you, Misha, don't worry, please! As long as I'm young, I'll always have plenty of money!" Then he changed the tone of his voice, and said, as if he were doing her an honour: "What are you now? . . . Then, you'll be an honest woman . . . you'll be my wife! When I become governor, my employees will kiss your hand and present you with bouquets of flowers!" Dunia answered still lower and still more obstinately, but her voice was trembling: "I don't want to marry you, Misha. Don't persuade me. Let's rather love each other as we are now! . . ."

I made Kudyar go more slowly, and pricked up my ears. Then the student said in a very loud voice, not even being ashamed before me: "If you don't want to marry me, take your money back!" and he pretended he was getting the money. I heard her crying and pointing at me with her little finger: "Mishechka, why are you torturing me? He can hear everything!" To this moment I can feel that cold little finger of hers in my back! The student got angry and made me stop the coach. "Be tortured!" he said. "Trash, you can drive. And I—a nobleman—my aunt is married to the Italian ambassador—I shall walk in the mud behind your coach. This is punishment for you!" And imagine—he really got out and walked!

It seemed as if some little string in her soul quivered and broke. Suddenly she shouted to me: "Drive, Mikulay!" Kudyar seemed to expect it—we flew where he led us. He went like that about seven miles; my hands got quite stiff holding the reins. All the time we were going along the paved road. Then she came to her senses, and ordered me to stop.

"Well, Mikulay," she said, "this is how things happen sometimes."

I turned toward her and was silent. She sat in the coach sideways, nibbling her little gloved finger. We both sat and trembled. And it was an autumn night—a pander. . . . Suddenly she said to me:

## THE CALENDAR

"Kiss me, Mikulay!"

But I understood her mood, and remained silent.

"Kiss me," she repeated, "kiss me, Mikulay! Nobody will see that you are kissing a hussy!"

I darted towards her—wanted to soothe her at first . . . imagine what it was! If she had told me: "Set Petersburg on fire, Mikulay . . . Kill Kudyar . . . Kill yourself." I would have done anything! All that night she called me "Mishechka," repeated that name in the darkness. But I did not understand that she was calling her student with her broken heart. My name is also Michael—I understood that afterwards! So we drove till dawn. All the time something was sucking at my heart, a feeling that I had not won her in the right way.

However, I caught the student later on. Once, as I drove up to the Peterhof restaurant, he came out with a girl—she was very round and had such a pompom on her breast. They got into my coach, not seeing me, as it was night.

"Bellevue," he said, "and go fast!"

Oh, how I whisked them away! Something inside of me welled up to my very mouth. As if I saw Dunia before my eyes, Dunia running in front of my coach. "Dunia," I thought, "my dear little lady Dunia!" And I got a whip from under my box, rose a little, and kept whipping Kudyar between the ears—Kudyar, who was so afraid of tickling! As if I wanted to overtake Dunia in front of me. We were still driving along the road, paved with wood, when the rubber tyres slipped off the back wheels of my coach. The wheels nearly went off the axle; Kudyar flew like a snake. But when we drove out of the town, you couldn't compare it to anything. My hat flew off my head. Somebody behind us screamed: "Hold them; they've crushed me!" . . . But we were already two miles away. . . .

The student's girl was being violently shaken. I heard it, because I saw neither fields nor road before me. In fact, I saw nothing. When the coach began to be hurled up and down, even my student sobered somewhat, and shouted in a loud voice: "Stop, you'll kill me!" I looked back at him. "Indeed," I said, "the road is torn up. When you are



### THREE TALES

governor, give orders to have it repaired ! ” They both clung to my belt, and only groaned.

At last I brought them to Bellevue—in an awful state. “ How much shall I pay you ? ” the student asked, and I answered angrily, “ Two hundred roubles ! ” He laughed and started to put the little glass in his eye. “ Fool ! ” he said, “ you ask too little ! Take this ! ” and he held out three hundred roubles to me.

I couldn’t bear that. “ You’re a fool yourself,” I said. “ You are Misha and I am Misha, so here’s something for you—take that ! ” And I whipped him across his eyes, yes, his eyes—once, and twice, and three times—till I whipped the little glass out. . . . Oh, there was a great row afterwards !

\* \* \*

Mishka Zibanda kept looking at the fire for some moments, smiling. Then his excited face began to cool down, its brightness faded away, the features grew dull. Three people went to the woods for some brushwood.

“ What a nobleman ! And what did he bring himself to ? To a peasant’s whip ! ” said Prokor Stafiev, who stood near Nastia.

Nastia was silent, and the duller Mishka’s face became, the more she blushed. She even opened her mouth, but pretended she was coughing. But everybody’s attention was already focussed on her. Then she asked—her voice completely betraying her :

“ And did you dally long with her, with your Dunia ? Of course, you were glad that a ‘ young lady ’ fondled you ! . ”

“ Bravo, brother ! ” suddenly and incomprehensively laughed Petka Hell, throwing up both his legs. The legs of Petka Hell somehow lived their own life, and expressed every feeling of their master in their own way. “ He’s got us right in the gills ! ”

“ No, not long,” quietly answered Zibanda. “ Afterwards she began to live with me . . . ” He remained silent for a while, and then looked at Nastia with a yawn. “ I gave her the slip in the end. She lost all her fire—began to drink. I’m unhappy with women. I left a hundred roubles on the table and ran away ! I ran away through the window, with the help of a gutter. . . . ”

## THE CALENDAR

"I remember something also—of a different sort," put in Savely, who had brought a basket of his mother's cookery and stayed for the night. "My prince, Nosovaton, a great man, died because of a duck. You see, Nosovaton had a duck, brought from abroad. . . . He used to lead it behind him on a golden chain, like a dog—it was very amusing. . . . There was also an Armenian, Sereza, in our Corps des Pages." Savely made his nose look flat and short by careless laughter. "Sereza took the duck and mated it with a cock. The point was, that the cock didn't come from good stock—it was taken from a peasant's yard!"

"It's impossible to mate a duck with a cock," irresolutely objected Efgraf Podpriatov.

"Impossible? But I held the duck myself! Impossible!" Savely's face expressed vexation at first, and then real delight. "Well, Nosovaton, of course, acted in the French fashion. . . . But Sereza couldn't bear it, and pierced Nosovaton through with his sword, like a button! And what did the man die for, may I ask? And what a man!"

"But Dunia had something peculiar in her, I suppose," laughed Brykin in a flattering way, looking at Mishka Zibanda.

"Ho ho!" Petka Hell jumped up, his feet cutting a caper by themselves, and his hands clapping his sides. "You can't manage your own wife, they say—and how could you, being such a pin?"

"I'm no more a pin than anybody else, but I've ceased to be afraid of Petkas," Brykin unsuccessfully tried to be witty.

Silence reigned for a while, and Garasim the Black was the first to break it.

"You mean you injured the horse during that last drive?" he asked Zibanda in a sullen way.

"We gave it to the Tartar trader the next day. . . ." unwillingly answered Mishka, and went to taste Gegunov's porridge.

The darkness of the night rustled. The three people were coming back with the brushwood.

### III.

The third night found them still before the fire, under the skies. Conversation arose about the rebellion of the town

### THREE TALES

against various important projects. They were about to recognise that it was useless to knock one's head against the wall : only in the hour of death would it be possible to find out whether there existed a supreme driver of all or not, and whether man was only the shadow of man.

"The law of nature ! It cannot be transgressed," said a bearded man from Otpetovo, throwing his head backward and looking steadily at some point before him.

"Trains are trespassing on your law !" Zibanda teased him, hacking a useless piece of wood with a little knife. "Science exists for every law of nature !"

"Nature will conquer science," said Prokor Stafiev. "It will be sorrow for the ignorant, but a double sorrow for the learned !"

"Nature will not conquer . . ." irresolutely drawled Petka Hell, looking questioningly at Zibanda.

"Yes, it will !" Efgraf Podpriatov stepped forward. "The son will not be able to resist his mother !"

"Just the same, the mother will not injure her son, even if he sits on her neck," smiled Zibanda.

"You can't tell," objected Podpriatov.

Everybody could see that Efgraf was leading up to something. He sat down on the edge of a log and began to stare at the fire. A complete silence reigned, and in the heart of it a fire burned, and people sat around it quietly. Suddenly Efgraf Podpriatov laughed gently, as if he remembered a merry end of some melancholy beginning. His speech was often interrupted by short laughter, so that there was something sly in it.

#### ABOUT THE FRANTIC KALAFAT.

My grandfather heard it from my great-grandfather, and it was read out of a book to him by a man of the old creed.

Old times were spacious times ! Even the air was purer ! Fields and birds, forests and foxes, and the springs running in the ravines ! The dominions were prodigiously large ; no years would be sufficient to walk around such a dominion. The czars were born unsociable, one even wilder than another. They used to climb up a tower in the morning, and look across the woods—the sight was very beautiful : the clouds ran, the woods rustled, the rivers flowed. Then the czar felt devoured



## THE CALENDAR

by fury; he started roaring from the tower: "Everything is mine: rivers and woods and swamps and ravines and peasants and bears and land and skies!" The peasant heard him, but did not feel offended. The cock also crows from his perch about his household, but he is even fed with ants' eggs for it. Thus sat the czar in the place of the cock. People lived without offence in those times . . .

About that time a son was born to one of these cocks. He began to grow up and to be covered with hair. . . . The man could have become famous because of his hair alone. This isn't a joke! Hair even gushed out of his eyes. On reaching his ninth year, the son went to see his father.

"You, father," he said, "live in an incoherent way! All your empire is scattered. Tell me, how many blades of grass are there in your fields, how many trees in your forests? Fish in the rivers, stars in the skies? Every blade of grass must be counted. Eh, you don't know?"

The father scratched himself. "That's true," he said, "but we've lived this way for twenty generations! We ate so much we couldn't turn over, we slept soundly—we lived in a very remarkable way!"

"But not in the right way," answered the son. "There exists a science called geometry: you must live according to its laws. Let us put a number on every fish as well as on every star and every blade of grass, blooming and unmarried. Now, I am going away to the mountains. There I will study geometry. . . ." Joke or no joke, he lifted a cottage on his back, and set off for the mountains.

He sat in the cottage for eleven years. Another man would have ploughed much land during that time, but he only studied his geometry. At last he knew it thoroughly. On reaching his twentieth year, he went again to see his father.

"Good morning, father," he said, "how are you?"

The father was scared. "You've certainly grown up," he said.

The son had really become very tall: he used to go out during a thunder storm, wave his cap in the skies, and drive the clouds away.

"Now," said the son, "I'll leave you, and do the business myself. From this day on, my name will be Kalaphat"

### THREE TALES

(which meant "I'll get everything" in their language). "Now I know how to astonish the world!"

The father said, "You, clever people, sing, and we, fools, will listen!"

The son dismissed his father, and started out to work himself in the sweat of his brow. He stamped the fish, issued passports to the birds, registered in a book each blade of grass.

And everything all round became melancholy. The groves grew silent, the parts of wood where the trees were cut off were overgrown with dirty aspen-shrubs. Joke or no joke, it produced a complete disorder in nature. Even the bear was pining away, not knowing what he was—a man or an animal, as a passport had been given to him. And Kalaphat conceived the idea of building a tower in order to reach the sky. "Let's see," he said, "what a sight we'll see from there. By the way, we'll stamp the stars while we're up there!" As soon as he decided to do this, the end of the world was in sight.

Joke or no joke—but the days of Kalaphat began. He assembled the peasants of his whole empire, and went out to fight. He conquered seven deaf countries, and two others surrendered without fighting, scared by his voice. From there Kalaphat rushed to the sea, and got hold of some people there. All these prisoners of war were made to build the tower for him.

But as he was coming home with all these peoples he met a little old man from the woods, who had a hat made of the bark of a tree, and a basket of linden bark in his hands. "Do not resist," said the little old man. "Let all your army go, do not harm yourself; better try and make shoes!" "No," answered Kalaphat, "I will erect the tower." "But look," said the old man, "there are other roads that also lead there!" "I want to grow up," answered Kalaphat. "But you are big enough already. People say that a sparrow has swollen into a ten-pound bird in your country." "That's a trifle," boasted Kalaphat. "In my empire even lice grow to five pounds." The little old man laughed: "Why, then, do you want to grow up if a louse grows with you? You'll become as large as a mountain, but the louse will become the size of half a mountain. It will bite you all the better for that!" Kalaphat turned away from the old man—who did not know geometry.

## THE CALENDAR

From that time on everything began to swell. Men were swelling from power and rage, trees from pride that they came out of the ground, the night became twice as long as the day—and Kalaphat's tower was growing. It went up under the very skies. It was twenty years in the building. They were twenty years for him—but no less than twenty centuries for us. It would have taken a year to walk around that tower. The clouds were bumping against it, and flowing in streams along its walls. Once the eldest mason came to see Kalaphat. "There is nowhere to go any more," he said. "We've come to a blind alley. And it's rather damp. . . . The filchers are trying to climb up first!" This was really true—while they were building the tower, a lot of filchers were bred—one filcher per brick.

When spring came, Kalaphat got ready to climb up to the sky. He chose seven filchers, the most honest of all, entered the tower, locked all the locks so that none of the common people, let us say, could follow him. Here begins the ascension of Kalaphat—nice little joke. . . .

For seven years Kalaphat climbed. Five of the filchers died because they could not bear the dampness. They climbed and climbed. At the end of the fifth year the skies began to be seen more clearly above their heads. Kalaphat made a last effort and leapt out on to the very top of the tower. He looked around him, and howled. The man of the old creed said that no poisoned dog ever howled like that czar. All his geometry proved a failure. . . .

While the czar was walking up the tower, the tower, which could not bear his heavy weight, was gradually sinking down into the ground. He never really went up a single inch: whenever he made a step upwards, the tower went a step downwards into the ground. And the woods were again rustling around, and there were foxes in the woods. The fields were blooming in fragrance, and there were birds in the fields. Nature threw away the passports of Kalaphat. . . .

Thus it all ended in nothing. . . .

\* \* \*

Efgraf finished his story, and again laughed, looking at the fire.



### THREE TALES

"If one could cover the ground with concrete, then one would probably get some profit out of it," said Teshka of Penza.

"Quite so! Perhaps hay grows up there. . . Then it wouldn't be necessary to cart it—one could simply throw it down," Semien teased him.

"But the little old man was worthy of interest," Stafiev pointed out; "he wished him well!"

*Translated by* LYDIA JIBURTOVITCH.

*(Leonid Leonov belongs to the new generation of Russian writers. He is still under thirty, we believe. So far, he has published only a volume of short stories, and a novel which is at present appearing in a Moscow periodical.)*

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# The Gossamer Diary.

By ARTHUR WALEY.

JAPANESE prose previous to *The Tale of Genji* is singularly uninteresting. A few humdrum fairy tales, some arid chronicles, a book of ritual, one or two very pedestrian novels, the chief of which is so heterogeneous in matter that it has been doubted whether it is one work or several—these make up the sum of Japanese prose literature down to the eleventh century. But there is one book which, though it is not a work of fiction, and though it lacks the qualities of deliberate art which make *Genji* so astonishing, at least seems to move in the same world of thought and feeling. This is the *Gossamer Diary* (Kagerō Nikki).

The writer was mistress of the great statesman, Fujiwara no Kane-iye (929-999). By him she had a son called Michitsuna, and her name not being recorded, she is known to history as "Michitsuna's mother." He made her acquaintance in 954, and Michitsuna was born the year after. But Kane-iye already had a wife, a legitimate family, and numerous mistresses. Lady Gossamer (as we will for convenience call the writer of the Diary) could not expect undivided attention. This was a fact that she took years to recognise, and when the diary closed (in the twentieth year of their *liaison*!) she had indeed recognised her position, but was still as far from accepting it as at the start.

The record begins in 954, the year in which they met. "For twenty days he has not been here at all." "This month he has written only twice . . ." Such entries are frequent from the beginning. Her grievance grew and grew. It became her whole life. When he did not come, she wept; when he came, she wept because he had not come sooner. She was immersed in perpetual devotions; while he, like our own eighteenth century bucks, whom in every particular he so strongly resembled, only turned religious when he was ill. Often he found her kneeling before an image of Buddha, lost in prayer, and one day, suddenly infuriated by this dismal reception, he kicked over her incense-bowl and, snatching the

## THE GOSSAMER DIARY

rosary from her hands, flung it across the room. He loved gaiety, noise, funny stories, practical jokes. She was shy, sensitive, and, above all, terribly serious. His method of entertaining her was to repeat with immense gusto "every piece of silly clownery or tomfoolery" that was current in the city, spiced with jokes and puns of his own.

She was incurably sentimental. Never for one instant could she recognise that time must bring changes, and after ten years she was still expecting him to court her with the ardour of *arishi toki*, "the times that were."

One night, when she is awaiting him, she lights the candles. No ! She will let him find her in the dark, as in those old days when their love was still a secret escapade. She puts the candles out, and hearing him fumbling at the entry, cries *Koko ni !* (Here ! ) and stretches out her hand, as she had often done before. But to-night he is in no mood for hide-and-seek. "What game is this ?" he cries angrily. "Light the candles at once. I cannot see my way into the room." Then he asks if they can find him a snack of something to eat ; he has had no supper. He eats his fish in silence, then says that he has had a tiring day, yawns, and falls asleep. At dawn his sons, the children of her rival, come to fetch him, and he calls her to the window to "look what fine young fellows they have grown."

His visits become more and more infrequent. She is desperately unhappy, talks of suicide, threatens to become a nun, and on more than one occasion actually instals herself in a nunnery, but always allows herself to be "rescued" at the last minute. The second flight was to a temple at Narutaki. Here she remained for many months in a state of the greatest agitation ; but she did not take her vows, and in the end allowed herself to be fetched quietly away by Kane-iye and her son Michitsuna, now a boy in his 'teens.

It was at this moment that she actually began the composition of the diary, the first part of which is not a day-to-day record, but an autobiographical fragment composed many years later than the events which it records. But henceforward the book has all the character of a diary, and is indeed very minute ; scarcely a shower passes unrecorded. A new phase in the story begins with the adoption by Lady Gossamer of a



## THE CALENDAR

little orphan girl aged twelve, a child of her lover Kane-iye by a woman whom years ago he had seduced and immediately abandoned. The child grows up and is ultimately courted by the head of the office in which Lady Gossamer's son Michitsuna is now working. Kane-iye gives his consent to the match; Lady Gossamer hears stories to the young man's discredit, foresees for her adopted daughter a life all too like her own, and opposes the plan.

Here (in 974 A.D., twenty years after she first met Kane-iye) the diary suddenly ends abruptly.

Publication in our sense of the word did not, of course, exist in those days. But no doubt a few copies of the book were made for those who were likely to be interested. Kane-iye himself, who lived on for another twenty-five years, surely possessed one. Now it was in the family of Kane-iye's legitimate son Michinaga\* that Murasaki, the authoress of the *Tale of Genji*, served as lady-in-waiting, and we know from Murasaki's diary that this Michinaga fell in love with her and courted her. It is more than probable that Michinaga had inherited a copy of the *Gossamer Diary* from Kane-iye, and in that case it is also very likely that he showed it to Murasaki. This much, at any rate, is certain, that we find in the *Gossamer Diary* an anticipation of just those characteristics which mark off *Genji* from other Japanese romances—apt delineation of character, swift narrative, vivid description, and above all, a realisation that a story of actual life, such as is led by hundreds of real men and women, is not necessarily less interesting than a tale crammed with ogres and divinities.

The following passage refers to the year 970, when Kane-iye (the lover) was forty-one, Michitsuna (the bastard) fifteen, and Lady Gossamer herself perhaps about thirty-five.

"Every day he promises it shall be to-morrow. And when to-morrow comes, it is to be the day after. Of course, I do not believe him; yet each time this happens I begin imagining that he has repented—that all has come right again. So day after day goes by.

"At last I am certain. He does not intend to come. I did not think that about unhappiness I had anything fresh to

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\* Died 1027 A.D.

## THE GOSSAMER DIARY

learn ; but I confess that never before have I endured such torture as in these last days. Hour after hour the same wretched thoughts chase through my brain. Shall I be able to endure it much longer ? I have tried to pray ; but no prayer forms itself in my mind save the wish that I were dead.

“But there is this lovely creature [her son Michitsuna] to think of. If only he were older and I could see him married to some girl whom I trusted, then I would indeed be glad to die. But as it is, how can I leave him to shift for himself—to wander perhaps from house to house ? No, that is too horrible. I must not die.

“I might, of course, become a nun and try to forget about all this. Indeed, I did once speak of it [*i.e.*, to Michitsuna] quite lightly, just to see how he would take it. He was terribly distressed, and, struggling with his tears, he told me that if I did so, he would become a monk, ‘For what would there be,’ he said, ‘to keep me in this world ? You are the only thing I care for.’ And at that he burst into a flood of tears. By this time I, too, was weeping ; but seeing him beside himself with grief, I tried to pass the thing off as a jest, saying, ‘Well, I mean to one day ; and what will your Highness do then ?’ It happened that he had a falcon on his wrist, and jumping straight to his feet, he set it free, reciting as he did so the verse : ‘Desolate must she be and weary of strife whose thoughts, like this swift bird, fly heavenwards at a touch.’

“At this, some of my servants who chanced to be sitting near by could not restrain their tears ; and it may be imagined with what feelings I, in the midst of the unendurable misery and agitation with which I was contending, heard my child utter these words.

“It was growing dark when suddenly *he* [her lover] arrived at the house. For some reason I felt certain that he had come only to regale me with all the empty gossip that was going round. I sent a message that I was not well and would see him some other time.

“It is the tenth day of the seventh month. Everyone is getting ready their Ullambana presents\*. If, after all these years, he should fail to send me anything for the festival, I

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\* Festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The presents given are to be used as offerings to Buddha.

## THE CALENDAR

think the most hard-hearted person in the world could not help being sorry for me ! However, there is still time.

“ Last night, just when I was thinking that I should have to get the offerings for myself and was weeping bitterly, a messenger came with just the same presents as in other years, and a letter attached ! Even the dead were not forgotten.\* In his letter he quoted the poem : ‘ Though never far away, yet wretched must I bide . . . ’ If that is indeed how he feels, his conduct becomes more than ever inexplicable ! No allusion to the fact that he has transferred his affections to someone else. Yet I am certain it is so.

“ It suddenly occurs to me that there is a certain gentlewoman in the household of that Prince Ono no Miya † who died the other day. I believe that it is she whom my lord is courting. She is called Omi, and I heard someone whispering not long ago that this Omi was having an adventure of some kind. He does not want her to know that he comes here. That is why he decided to break with me beforehand. I said this to one of my maids ; but she doubted if there was anything in it. ‘ Oh, well, it may be so,’ she said, ‘ but in any case, this Omi is not the sort of person to ask any questions . . . ’

“ I have got another idea. I think it is one of the daughters of the late Emperor. But what difference does it make ! In any case, as everyone tells me, it is no use just sitting and watching him slip away from me as one might watch the light fade out of the evening sky. ‘ Go away, pay a visit somewhere or other,’ they say to me. I have thought about nothing else day or night but this hideous business. The weather is very hot. But it is no use going on talking about what I am going to do. This time my mind is made up. I am going to Ishiyama for ten days.

“ I decided to tell no one, not even my brothers, and stole from the house very secretly, just before dawn. Once outside, I began to run as fast as I could. I had almost reached the Kamo River when some of my women came rushing after me with all sorts of stuff. How they discovered that I had fled and that this was the direction I had taken, I still do not know.

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\* *i.e.*, especially her mother. The festival was on behalf of the souls of dead parents and ancestors.

† An uncle of Kane-iye's.

## THE GOSSAMER DIARY

The setting moon was shining very brightly, and we might easily have been recognised ; but we met no one.

“ When we came to the river someone told me there was a dead man lying face downwards on the shingle. I did not feel afraid.

“ By the time we reached Awada Hill I began to be very exhausted, and was obliged to rest. I had still not decided what I should do when I arrived, and in the agony of trying to make up my mind, I burst into tears. I could not risk being seen in such a state, and staggering to my feet, I set out once more, just able to drag myself along a step or two at a time.

“ By the time we reached Yamashina it was quite light. I felt like a criminal whose guilt has suddenly been exposed, and became so agitated that I scarcely knew what I was doing. My women had now fallen behind. I waited for them, and made some of them go in front, myself walking alone so that we might attract as little attention as possible. Yet the people I met stared at me and whispered together excitedly. I was terrified.

“ Scarcely able to draw breath, I at last reached Hashiri-i. Here they said it was time for breakfast, and having opened the picnic baskets, they were just arranging the mats and getting things ready when we heard people coming towards us, shouting at the top of their voices. What was I to do ? Who could it be ? I could only suppose that they were friends of one or another of the maids who were with me. ‘ Could anything more tiresome have happened ? ’ I was just thinking, when I saw that the people were on horseback, and formed part of a large travelling party, consisting of numerous outriders and a number of waggons and coaches. It was, in fact, the retired governor of Wakasa coming back from his province. Soon they began to pass the place where we were sitting. Fortunate travellers ! Among them are many who from to-day onwards will kneel in my Lord’s presence noon and night ! This thought cut through my heart like a knife. It seemed to me that the drivers took the waggons as close as they could to where we spread our mats. While they were passing us, not only the servants who were at the back of the coaches, but even the drivers and grooms, behaved disgracefully, making such remarks as I have never heard before. My ladies showed great



## THE CALENDAR

spirit, hastily moving our belongings as far from the roadside as they could, and calling out : ‘ This is a public highway, isn’t it ? We have just as good a right to be here as you ! ’ What an odious scene to be mixed up with ! As soon as they were well out of sight, we pressed on again, and were soon passing through the Osaka gate. I reached the quay at Uchide\* more dead than alive. My people, whom I had sent on ahead, had gathered long bulrushes and built for me a kind of shelter or cabin on the deck. I crept on board and lay down, scarcely noticing whether we had the boat to ourselves or not. Soon we were far out upon the lake. During the voyage, as we drew further and further from the city, I felt a loneliness, an anguish, an utter helplessness impossible to describe. It was well after the Hour of the Monkey (*i.e.*, about five p.m.) that we reached the temple.

“ As soon as I had taken a bath, I went and lay down. Again I began trying to make up my mind what I should do, and for several hours I lay tossing from side to side, unable to get any rest. At dusk I washed again and went up into the chapel.

“ I began trying to make my confession to Buddha ; but tears choked me, and my voice fell to a whisper. It was now quite dark. I went to the window and looked out. The chapel stood high, and below it was what seemed like a precipitous ravine ; it lay in a cup or hollow, and the steep banks on either side were overgrown with tall trees, so that the place was very closed-in and dark. The moon was some twenty days old, and having risen late in the night, was now shining with extraordinary brilliance. Here and there the moonlight pierced through the trees, making sudden patches of brightness. There was one such just at the foot of the cliff. Looking straight below me, I could see what appeared to be a vast lake, but was indeed only a small drinking pool. I went on to a balcony and leant over the railing. Among the grass on the steep bank far below me I could see something white appearing and disappearing, and at the same time there was a curious, rustling sound. I asked what it was, and was told that these were deer. I was wondering why I had not heard them cry as one generally

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\* Modern Ōtsu, now reached from Kyōto (Lady Gossamer’s starting-point) by tramway in half an hour.

## THE GOSSAMER DIRAY

does, when suddenly from the direction of quite a different valley there came a faint, weak sound, like the wailing of a new-born child. Surely it must be a young doe crying a great way off? At first I thought that I was imagining the sound; but presently it became unmistakable.

"I was lost in prayer and knew nothing of what was going on around me, when a hideous yelling, seeming to come from the far side of the hills at which I had been looking, broke in upon my prayers. It was a peasant chasing someone off his land. Never had I heard a voice more pitiless, more ferocious. If such sounds as that proved to be common happenings in this place, I knew that I should not hold out very long, and, utterly shattered, I sat for a while trying to recover my composure. At last I heard a sound of chanting in the temple; the monks had begun to sing the *goya*,\* and I left the chapel. Feeling very weak, I again took a bath. It was beginning to grow light, and looking about me I saw that a heavy night-mist was rolling away to the west, blown by a light, steady wind. The view beyond the river looked as though painted in a picture. Near the water horses were quietly grazing; they looked strangely small and far away. It was very lovely.

"If only my beloved child were in safe hands, I would give everything up and arrange to end my days here. But the moment I think of him, I long to be back in the city, and become very depressed.

"He will be coming with the other boys on the excursion to Sakura-dani, which is not far from here. If he were to come, I could not bear to hear that he had passed so close. . . . I do not want to go back, but I think if anyone fetched me I should consent to go. But should I? I worry about this all the time, and cannot bring myself to eat anything.

"They came and told me they had been for a walk behind the monastery and found some meadow-sweet growing near a pond. I asked them to bring me some, which they did, and put the flowers in a bowl, along with some lemons on stripped stems. It really looked very pretty.

"When it was dark I went back to the chapel and spent the night in confession and prayer, weeping bitterly the whole

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\* The late night service.

## THE CALENDAR

while. Towards daybreak I dozed for a moment and dreamt that I saw one of the monks (the one who seems to act as a sort of steward here) fill a bucket with water and put it in the seat on my right. I woke up with a start and knew at once that this dream had been sent to me by Buddha. It was certainly not of a kind to bring me much encouragement.\*

"Presently someone said that it was now broad daylight, and breaking off my prayers, I came down from the chapel.

"I found, however, that it was really still quite dark. Only across the surface of the lake a whiteness was creeping, against which were dimly outlined the figures of some twenty men clustered together on the shore. They all seemed to be gazing intently at something that was hidden from me by the shadow of the cliff. But though I could see nothing, I knew that from that dark place would presently issue the boat for which they were waiting.

"A priest, who had just come from the early morning service, was standing on the cliff watching the boat put out from the shore, and as it drew further and further away from him, it seemed to me that he gazed after it almost wistfully. Should I too, if I had been here as many years, grow weary of the place and long for escape? It may be so. 'This time next year!' the young men in the boat shouted, and by the time the priest had called 'Good-bye,' they were already mere shadows in the distance. I looked up at the sky. The moon was very slim. Its narrow bow was reflected in the lake. A rainy wind was now blowing, and presently the whole surface of the water became covered with glistening ripples. The young men in the boat had begun to sing, and though their voices were very faint, I could hear what song they were singing. It was 'Haggard has grown the face . . .' and the sound of it brought back the tears to my eyes.

"Ikaga Point, Yamabuki Point—promontory after promontory was now emerging from the darkness. And as my eye travelled along the shore, I suddenly saw something moving through the reeds. Before I could see clearly what it was, I began to hear the noise of oars, and then the low humming of a rower's song. A boat was drawing near. Someone standing

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\* It foreboded ill to Kane-iye, who was at that time Marshal of the Body-guard of the *Right*. Water typifies weakness and death.

## THE GOSSAMER DIARY

further down the shore called out as it passed, 'Where are you making for?' 'For the temple,' a voice from the boat answered, 'to fetch the lady. . .'

"How my heart beat when I heard those words! It seems that, despite all my precautions, he\* caught wind of my plan, and sent some servants to escort me; but by then I had already started. They were at first wrongly directed, hence the delay. The boat pulled inshore, room was made for us, and soon we were on our homeward way, the oarsmen singing lustily. As we passed along the side of Seta Bridge, it began to grow quite light. A covey of sand-plovers, with much frilling of wings, flew right across us, and indeed, before we reached the quay, where two days ago I had taken boat, we had seen many lovely and moving sights. A carriage was waiting for me at the quay, and I was back in the city soon after the hour of the Snake (10 a.m.).

"No sooner did I reach home than my women gathered round me full of lurid stories about all that had been going on in the world since my departure.

"It is really very odd that they should still think such things have any interest for me, and so I told them."

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\* Kane-iye.



# Audience

BY DOUGLAS GARMAN.

FOR so long has the "Sing, Muse!" and "heavenly numbers" attitude to poetry served as the only go-between for Parnassus and the reading world, that now, when the general incredulity has robbed that pander of his magic wand, the two realms are almost completely estranged. The poet is discredited. To the scientific man—not to be confused with the scientist—who has dispensed with *superstitious* religion to take part in the worship of some such fetish as Progressive Evolution, with its ritual of vegetarian food and hierophantic contraception, poetry is the day-dreaming of ninnies and charlatans. In the Universities and other centres of culture, it is worn ostentatiously like Oxford trousers or pederasty. It oozes into the home circle through the loud-speaker between the Kiddies' Half-Hour and Jack Hylton's band, and is used by educational systems to teach elocution or to instil patriotism. "Poetry Lover" writes to his weekly literary paper to ask if any reader can tell him in which of Shakespeare's plays is the significant line, "God's in his heaven, All's well with the world," and in the few girls' schools which have not yet suffered Sport's runbustious rape, the more romantic sleep with Francis Thompson beneath the pillow—languid Desdemonas sighing for their Moor.

But it is not only such "low-brow" audiences that take up a stultifying attitude towards poetry. A critic who writes in appreciation of a poem, "In the wistful simplicity of these lines we recognise the true lyric spontaneity which is the real stuff of poetry," is not necessarily less intelligent than he who says: "This subtle meiosis, achieved by an intensely personal angle of vision, has the value of a profound emotive statement." Or, to particularise. When Mr. Aldington writes of a poet whom he considers to be "the most high-brow in the world," yet, after much eulogistic generalising—"it is like an aquarium; it is like a zoo . . . it is like the note-book of a professor of psychology . . . extremely clever, subtle, humorous, original, interesting. . . . The rhythms are almost disconcertingly sober; the patterns in which she arranges them are elegantly

## AUDIENCE

gawky"—admits that "Still one is baffled in the attempt to seize this prodigiously alert talent," and, in order to support his opinion that his subject is "the best living poet in America," is reduced "to putting it on the basis of personal preference," he admits his failure to give a generally valid estimate. But then, so does Mr. F. L. Lucas, who, when appraising another poet, though he does so in such commonly accepted terms as, "their unusual pleasantness as pure sound," "the writer's gift for melodies that cling in the memory," "that indefinable quality which the poetaster always lacks," yet suggests that "the reader desires nothing better than to shut critical eyes for a moment in pure enjoyment," etc. The expression of such opinions, held for no more cogent reasons than personal preference or uncritical enjoyment, would scarcely be tolerated in the discussion of a scientific or ethical question, but is accepted with respect when the subject is the merits of a poem. The inference, that poetry is looked upon as being unconnected with a radically intelligent activity, is only too well supported by other facts, some of which I have noticed.

It is, indeed, this tendency to set poetry apart from the lively interests of existence that makes the question of an audience particularly important. Amongst readers there are, on the one hand, those who still look upon the poet as the voice of God or the Gods, and on the other are an increasing number who believe that their own dissatisfaction with life will be appeased, or may, at any rate, be advantageously exploited, by the practice of an art, to some understanding of which they have been led by appreciation. The former are the less interesting. They will get from poetry what they bring to it. That is to say, having at some period in their development decided what is poetical—romance, Nature, breasts, dawn, etc.—they will look to poetry for some or other of these touchstones, which will release the flood of their own emotions to swirl at random round the supposed concept of the poet. He will tell them nothing, but will move them violently as skirts blown in the wind will arouse other minds, or stir them to a consideration of transcendental generalities, from which they are ordinarily precluded by their natural sluggishness. The academic reader is of the same class. He differs in that his preconceptions about poetry are formal

## THE CALENDAR

rather than emotional, and are affected by a grocer's knowledge of precedent, weighing out critical opinions for and against like sugar. His attitude to poetry is indirect, arrived at only through the mediation of the critics, and will not serve him when faced with modern poetry. I would justify this by reference to the modern section of the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, which is filled out with such completely banal lines as :

“ A Garden is a lovesome thing, God wot !

Rose plot,

Fringed pool,

Fern'd grot—”

The Emotives are innocuous : the Academics are useful as scavengers of fouled texts and collectors of information of subsidiary importance for the reader. As audiences, however, their influence is either nil or deadening, for the contemporary poetry of their choice will be the work of “*mécánistes*,” of whom de Gourmont writes :

“ Ils se servent volontiers de tout ce qui a été sacré par l'usage, des phrases connues, riches de ferments émotionnels pour avoir traîné partout, des locutions, des proverbes, de tout ce qui abrège, de tout ce qui résume . . . Ne possédant pas de jardin, il achète des fleurs et rêve qu'il les a cueillies.”

The other group of readers, the participant amateurs, are more active in their approach to poetry, but their appreciation of it is likely to be as restricted. Their influence is certainly more fatal. Their eye is fixed on the poet rather than on the poetry, so that the biographical personality takes on a greater importance than the poetical, and their attitude at its silliest extreme, degenerates into a mere talismanic appreciation—Rimbaud is idolised for his antinomianism, Shelley for his transcendental socialism, Brooke for his patriotism. Their admirers, like knights bearing their emblems, lice, absent-mindedness or romantic frontispiece, make war against the Philistines by assuming a sympathetic pose in morals or behaviour, *ad majorem gloriam Bohemiae*, and from their strongholds look out in sterile defiance on a world in which they have no interests, and with which they have no practical relations. But this group is not only represented by such riff-raff. The question which they so glibly obviate—Does modern

## AUDIENCE

poetry offer an adequate reaction to the experiences of life? —is nevertheless turned, though less crudely, by more intelligent readers.

The specious substitution in the nineties of art for life, flourished exotically for a while, wilted and died for lack of dung. But there are still many who are gulled by the alchemists into a search for that philosopher's stone, pure art. The suppression of capital letters and typographical vagaries are two of the tricks by which they may be recognised; but they will stop short of no nonsense. That the sects which promulgate the theories to support such practices should arise chiefly in France, does not limit their influence to that country. Such creeds as that of the "surréalistes"—"*Dictée de la pensée, en l'absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison, en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale*"—find as ardent, though less agile, followers in this country and America. We, too, hear of attempts to distill the fine essence of poetry by interpreting its imagery as dream-symbols, and by the making of verse so pure that it will be devoid of all meaning.

Of themselves these manifestations are important, and they also illustrate the danger of an audience broken up into small groups. The tendency is towards the formation of an indefinite number of these, each of which will produce within and for itself a slightly differentiated type of poetry, and will, since there can be no common ground, fulfil the double function of poet and audience. The process is analagous to masturbation, and, continued, would be as conducive to impotence as the unremitting practice of that habit. The first stage has been reached when individual preference passes itself off self-confidently as criticism, and adjudges poetry without reference to any standard by discovering for each poet a peculiar aim and a peculiar scale of values. And the next is already in sight. The foggy and mean-spirited equalitarianism which assumes that the common accident of birth entitles all men to an equal consideration has its counterpart in aesthetics. The lazy critic, or he who is not fertile enough to invent a distinct poetic for each poet, will welcome the annihilation of standards, for he will then be free to acclaim every little possessor of a problem and a pen as a sincere and original artist.



## THE CALENDAR

The position is not fairly comparable with that in 1800. There was then a much clearer line of distinction between the old and the new schools of poetry, as there was between the political parties. Now every politician, from Mr. Baldwin to Mr. MacDonald, has subordinated his party's point of view to the consideration of the pressing needs of his less fortunate fellows; and the same confusion is apparent amongst the readers of poetry. There is no longer a body of opinion so solid as that represented by *The Quarterly*, *The Edinburgh*, and *Blackwood's*. The fact that they pronounced a vigorous aesthetic creed, and were, therefore, of the greatest benefit to a lively interest in poetry, is forgotten because they were sometimes ungentlemanly. Their place has been taken, but not filled, by the torrential journalistic criticism which is poured out daily, weekly, and monthly, and is so enlightened and refined that the fulfilment of its obvious function is overlooked in its effort to be open-minded and polite. There has never been such a rubbishy flow of poetry as that which is vomitted by contemporary publishers, yet the reading public has never expressed its opinion through such mealy-mouthed critics. Smut alone has moved their costive sensibilities to a definite opinion, and then their virulence was only equalled by their obtuseness. For the most part their opinions are diluted with the oils of snobism or social decorum.

I do not attempt to discover a fundamental condition which might account for the false attitudes of these various types of audience, but it is obvious that the advances made by science play a great part in determining it. Their most important effect, which has lately reached its culmination, has been the breaking down of the whole range of spiritual values by discrediting the supernatural structure on which they were based. But the conclusion that this should prevent poetry from giving an adequate re-action to the whole of experience is one which I see no reason for admitting. That such a possibility should present itself to very intelligent minds argues an unjustified belief in the absolute value of scientific discoveries, and since this belief undoubtedly hampers poetic expression, I would draw attention, by a particular case, to the danger of over-stressing it.

It may be not unreasonably assumed that one of the

## AUDIENCE

principal motives for the creation of poetry has always been a maladjustment between the poet and the sum of his surroundings. Now science has destroyed the once deep-seated belief that the maladjustment caused by eating before Mass was much greater than that caused by fasting, but it does not follow that the maladjustment due to being in love is no greater than that which is occasioned by a need to make water. Yet there is a noticeable tendency towards such assumptions as the groundwork for much modern poetry. Even if all emotional and intellectual experiences should be reduced to the dead level of a pathological re-arrangement of atoms, the poet would not be concerned save in so far as this will effect his own attitude to life. Wordsworth's observation that "The appropriate business of poetry (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they appear ; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*," is still true. Science affects poetry by modifying the evidence of the senses and of the passions ; which means, particularly, that only that poetry which shows itself alive to the current advances of scientific thought and which does not attempt to justify itself aesthetically by discrediting itself intellectually, will be acceptable to the intelligent reader. It is probable that such readers exist, having the requisite poetic sensitiveness, but if the poet is to find them for his audience, the whole critical temper must change. When E. M. has beaten the last covey of hand-raised birds from the Georgian preserves, and Mr. Squire's conviction that our age will be remembered as one "during which fifty men had written lyrics of some durability for their truth and beauty," has finally been disproved by the quality of the anthologies, there will be a chance for a "bloodless revolution" to be brought about by the Hellenism which Matthew Arnold prescribed. But the part to be played by the audience is as important as the poet's, and it is possible that a regeneration of intelligent sensibility may only be possible after a devastating and bloody revolt against the sickly, bourgeois, animal consciousness of our age.

# Scrutinies

## (5) Bernard Shaw

By C. H. RICKWORD.

BEFORE the war, in the hurly-burly of controversy provoked by Mr. Shaw's attacks on a moribund and dangerous morality, it was possible to overlook the positive side of his work. Indeed, the number of the charges of inconsistency that it was fashionable to hurl against him is a proof that for many people the destruction of the old gods was a spectacle so tearful that it blinded them completely to the sight of Mr. Shaw carefully re-moulding the fragments into a row of little figures of an astonishing similarity in essentials, called Cæsar, Undershaft, the Devil, Lady Cicily Waynfleet, and (in the post-war extension) St. Joan, an Ancient or Lilith, according to the manner and degree in which they expressed his philosophy.

To a post-war audience, such a mistaking of the iconographer for an iconoclast is no longer possible. The hurly-burly languished after the death in the war of the principal contestant, and in so far as his plays are the records of Mr. Shaw's death-grapple with Morality, their interest now is as purely spectacular as the interest would be in the Carpentier-Dempsey film if the figure of Carpentier were blotted out. In respect, then, of the destructive side of his work, Mr. Shaw would seem to be in danger of the usual ironical fate of the artist who bends his art to the direct improvement (by flogging) of his age. The more successfully such an artist diagnoses and lashes the follies, which are commonly the ephemeral manners, of his time, the more swiftly and completely does his value to posterity depend on his purely literary virtues of wit in arrangement and language.

But an immortality such as Sheridan's, though it might satisfy Mr. Shaw's claim to be a "classical dramatist," would not justify his more cherished appellation of "serious." \* Nor, indeed, would it be appropriate to Mr. Shaw, whose function, far from being satirical, is truly that of the evangelist. Even his technique is an adaptation to the purposes of the theatre of the methods of the revivalist preacher, who, seeking to turn men from their wickedness, contrasts their sin and wretchedness with his own inner vision of happy righteousness, seasoning the whole with threats of hell. In theatrical practice, this method consists of inventing a number of people who by following their passions and prejudices, become involved in a

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\* "So that finally you cannot claim that Shakespeare took the theatre seriously. I did." "I am, and always have been, a classical dramatist." The Table-Talk of G. B. S., by Archibald Henderson. CHAPMAN AND HALL, 5/- net.

## SCRUTINIES

most unpleasant situation, and of injecting into this situation an heroic paragon of self-control, an embryo Ancient, untrammelled by passion or instinct. To this person are allotted the combined functions of chorus and protagonist. As chorus, he, or she, holds up Reason's unprejudiced mirror to the imperfect characters:

Lady Cicely: . . . Oh! Oh! Nothing will ever persuade me you are as pigheaded as that.

Brassbound (offended): Pigheaded!

Lady Cicely (with quick caressing apology): No, no, no. I didn't mean that. Firm! Unalterable! Resolute! Iron-willed! Stonewall Jackson! That's the idea, isn't it?

And as protagonist—since such exchanges illuminate the spectators of a drama more than its persons—the Hero is endowed with the practical omnipotence that selflessness and detachment confer when joined to knowledge of the human heart:—

Lady Cicely (shaking her head): I have never been in love with any real person; and I never shall. How could I manage people if I had that mad little bit of self in me? That's my secret.

If parables on such lines are to be convincing, two aesthetic considerations must be observed. The story must develop truly from the imperfect characters, who must be felt to be real; and the Superperson must be acceptable as a development of human possibilities, lest we prefer Arcadia to Olympus.

The charge that to Mr. Shaw actors are puppets to be put up to spout Shavian ideas and oratory is familiar. In so far as it is based on the possession by all the characters of Mr. Shaw's own powers of giving clear and dynamic expression to ideas, it is no more justified than it would be to complain that Shakespeare endows all and sundry with his poetry. But as Mr. Shaw has pointed out, in Shakespeare, "the individualisation . . . owes all its magic to the turn of the line, which lets you into the secret of its utterer's mood and temperament, not by its common-place meaning, but by some subtle exaltation, or stultification, or slyness, or delicacy, or hesitancy, or what not in the sound of it." Mr. Shaw, as a rule, obscures his deficiency in this essential magic by differentiating his characters rather than by individualising them. Whenever possible, he employs the purely mechanical method of collecting his persons from as many different social strata as possible. Thus, in "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," there figure a Cockney wastrel, a Scotch missionary, the half-caste Captain, a Yorkshire petit-bourgeois seaman, an aristocratic ne'er-do-well, a member of the higher official class, and an aristocratic lady, as well as Americans, Arabs, and what not. Whenever, as in Act II. of "Major Barbara," persons on the same cultural level come together, it becomes apparent that the idiomatic timbre of the dialogue has no variety, that Mr. Shaw differentiating between his



## THE CALENDAR

characters purely by the commonplace meaning of what they say, relies for the whole of the individualisation on the imagination of actor or reader, prompted by the description of as much as an observant spectator could deduce from an actor's appearance, assisting them by the merest sign-posts in the dialogue. This method that allows the rapid noting of the characteristics and manners of social types and the development of action strictly from these, reveals the inability of the observer's faculty to synthesise traits into imagined characters. The loss in purely didactic effect can be gauged by a comparison with Ibsen, whose characters attain typical dimensions because they are conceived and realised as individuals and not merely the common denominator of a number of individuals.

The characteristic Shavian Hero appears very early, and continues, apart from the minor alterations of disguise necessitated by the dramatic situation, unaltered through the plays in a series that culminates in the Ancients and Lilith. In "An Unsocial Socialist" he is already fully developed. A gentleman who has deserted his wife six weeks after his marriage justifies his action: "Before three soft speeches have escaped me, I rebuke myself for folly and insincerity. Before a caress has had time to cool, a strenuous revulsion seizes me; I long to return to my old lonely ascetic life; to my dry books; my Socialist propagandism; my voyage of discovery through the wilderness of thought . . . Love cannot keep possession of me; all my strongest powers rise up against it, and will not endure it."

Cæsar, in the best poetic-by-moonlight manner, addresses similar sentiments to the Sphinx: ". . . I have wandered in many lands, seeking the lost regions from which my birth into this world exiled me, and the company of creatures such as I myself. I have found flocks and pastures, men and cities, but no other Cæsar, no air native to me, no man kindred to me, none who can do my day's deed and think my night's thought. . . . And here at last is their sentinel—an image of the constant and immortal part of my life, silent, full of thoughts, alone in the silvery desert."

Such speeches can be found in nearly every play, uttered by characters whose names are many, but whose nature's one. Under-shaft, Lady Cicely Waynefleet, Candida, the Polish Acrobat, the Devil and his disciple, as much as Long-livers and Ancients are working models of the Superman, product of Creative Evolution.

It is notable that the speech just quoted is pointed, and the transition to a lower emotional level effected, by a joke whose crudity might have shamed the gagging clowns detested by Shakespeare. Similar jocosities punctuate nearly all Mr. Shaw's elevated passages. That, beyond irritating by their cheapness, they do not jar, proves not their aptness, but the justice of Mr. Shaw's suspicion of the quality of the preceding heroics. Exasperated critics, convinced that

## SCRUTINIES

the burst of horse-laughter accounted for the mis-firing of such high moments, have either blamed the uncontrolled exuberance of Mr. Shaw's Irish wit, or have regretfully admitted the necessity for Comic Relief. But it is significant that these interruptions are not witty in Mr. Shaw's usual manner, that since they are on the farcical instead of the comic plane, their effect is not to heighten by contrast what has gone before, but to obliterate that by purely mechanical laughter. It is as though Mr. Shaw desired to have it both ways. To those who consider the sublimity rhetorical balderdash, the joke appears to indicate the author's agreement; while those who think the reverse can find consolation, or additional rage, in the temperamental inability of author and actor to refrain from playing for a laugh.

The necessity for such devices, that are akin to the buffoonery of a timid man in company, arises out of a sentimental dread of emotion, a fundamental distrust of irrational experience. Similarly accounted for is Mr. Shaw's tendency to write what has been called "melodrama with his tongue in his cheek," as, for instance, in "The Devil's Disciple." The main plot of that drama, with its traditional climax of a last minute reprieve from the scaffold, is pure melodrama, whereas the underplot of which the persons are General Burgoyne and his Major, was conceived as pure comedy. The artistic discomfort involved by the impossibility of harmonising such discordant elements is extreme to an audience unable to share Mr. Shaw's satisfaction at the demonstration of the superiority of his intelligence.

The readiness of Mr. Shaw to pay the price of artistic integrity for such a demonstration is not merely an indication of the strength of his social conscience. That a social conscience is no impediment to the creation of great art, provided the artist is capable of firmly envisaging and truthfully portraying reality, is apparent from Ibsen. But Ibsen distributes tragic responsibility among all his characters impartially, with, perhaps, an extra share for those who suffer from "divine discontent," whereas Mr. Shaw, for whom "the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent efforts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history," blames only those irrational human qualities (represented dramatically by the imperfect characters) that are antagonistic to the Life Force (represented by the Hero) as he conceives it. Though Mr. Shaw claims that his doctrine of Creative Evolution is scientifically true, obviously he adopted it as an explanation of life that justified, even elevated into a virtue, his temperamental distaste for certain aspects of life, and his personal predilection for certain other aspects. It is necessary, then, to investigate Mr. Shaw's doctrine of Creative Evolution in order to discover how far his likes and dislikes have universal significance.

## THE CALENDAR

Since the truth of that theory is established for Mr. Shaw, its scientific plausibility does not matter here. What is important is the interpretation of its significance and process that are implied by Mr. Shaw's temperament. Theoretically, the theory regards Life as striving continuously for a fuller and freer state of existence, its weapons self-consciousness and self-control. But in Mr. Shaw's practice, the process is almost entirely one of discarding. Instincts, passions, and appetites together with their appropriate physical organs, disappear much as if they were carious teeth in the mouth of Intelligence. Such human qualities that Mr. Shaw finds hostile to his conception of orderly and unemotional "progress" are not harmonised and harnessed by the personality, but dominated and abolished by an abstract "Mind."

The contrast with the pessimistic Shakespeare's interpretation of destiny is complete. He, even more aware than Shaw of the disruptive tendency of great passions, of the liability of virtue (in its widest sense) to diversion into alien channels, does not shirk the necessity for the wasteful destruction of his Hero. But by the end of his tragedy not only has life resumed its course, but the conviction is imaginatively conveyed that the precedent waste is compensated for on a scale of values that, imposed by thought on experience, are spiritually satisfying. But then, Shakespeare approached reality unprejudiced by any ethical conception, whereas Mr. Shaw approaches it with a scale of values founded on an abhorrence of human nature and a conviction of its original and unredeemable sinfulness. The dramas that result, far from attempting a reconciliation of life in the classical manner, are purely romantic flights from reality. In his revulsion, Mr. Shaw has constructed a universe as purely in his own image as Shelley's. But whereas Shelley is enabled to secure acceptance by his literary equipment as a poet and by the preservation in his universe of many human qualities in a etherialised form, Mr. Shaw has on his side only oratory and the puritanical conscience. So that, when we are offered the alternative of serving God in Mr. Shaw's way or of being scrapped by the life force (or in other words, being sent to Hell), it is excusable if we regard the choice as being between assassination and suicide—and decline to comply either way.

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## Notes on Music.

### (1) The Recognition of Greatness.

By CECIL GRAY.

ONE of the few noteworthy events of the past musical season has been the publication of a book by Mr. Ernest Newman. If there is one point on which musicians of all parties and denominations in this country can be said to agree, it is on this, that Mr. Newman is one of the few critics—perhaps the only one—whose judgments and opinions deserve the utmost respect and the closest attention. In saying this, one does not need to agree with all his opinions; one can even, like the present writer, cheerfully disagree with almost everything he says, yet admit that in him one is confronted with a keen critical intelligence, supported by great erudition, wide culture, and a caustic and witty pen.

His latest book, "A Musical Critic's Holiday," shows that he has lost none of these qualities in the passage of the years, though one must confess that in the past one has known the last-mentioned to be keener and readier. One feels, too, that his usual care has not gone to the shaping of the book, which reads as if it were made up of a series of separate essays on the same theme, rather than conceived throughout as a whole. This results in a great deal of unnecessary repetition. For example, there must be at least twenty re-statements in the course of the book of the theory that "There has never yet been a composer so greatly in advance of his time that only an initiate here and there—one or two out of a vast population of cultivated musicians and music-lovers—could understand him." This theory, with its corollary that "None of the new works of to-day that fail to justify themselves at once aesthetically to the average musical sense of the period will be of much significance for the future" is his main theme, which runs throughout the book like an obsession or *idée fixe*.

The impression one gets from this continual harping on one note is that of a man who is trying to convince himself quite as much as his readers. One is inclined to think that Mr. Newman does not really believe in his theory to the extent he would like to do. He certainly proves satisfactorily that the sentimental belief, so current to-day, that a great genius must necessarily be persecuted and misunderstood, has no solid foundation in fact. He convincingly disproves the popular legend concerning the lack of appreciation accorded to Wagner's music, and points to the fact that Mozart, Beethoven, and, indeed, the vast majority of great composers, enjoyed the respectful attention of their contemporaries. But to go to the opposite extreme and state categorically that there never



## THE CALENDAR

has been a great composer who has had to wait for posterity to see his greatness and that there consequently never will be such a phenomenon in the future, is to fall into an equally grave error which has as little foundation as the contrary belief.

The truth, as usual, is to be found between these two extremes. The artist of outstanding eminence gets, on the whole, as much opportunity and attention as the artist of the second rank, neither more nor less. Only the few are able to distinguish clearly between first and second-rate art; the vast majority even of the more intelligent and discriminating section of the public are totally unable to differentiate between the two, and lend an equally receptive, or unreceptive, ear to all who speak sufficiently loudly to attract their attention. Exceptions are, of course, to be found in both directions. There have been great artists who have at once been recognised as such, and there are others who have been totally ignored. The reasons for these exceptions are generally to be found in extraneous circumstances, and in the nature of their respective talents.

Mr. Newman passes in review all the cases of those composers who have been supposed, wrongly according to him, to have received less than their deserts at the hands of their contemporaries, and finds only one which might at first sight seem to support the fallacy which he is combating, namely, the case of Bach. But, says Mr. Newman, there were reasons for this phenomenon which disqualify it from being used as an argument against his theory. In the first place, Bach's work was nearly all unpublished, and secondly, he was regarded by his own generation as being somewhat old-fashioned.

Now, no one is likely to deny that there are reasons for all occurrences of this kind. The fact remains that here is an example of a great composer, possibly the greatest of all composers, who was not appreciated for over a hundred years after his death; and what has happened once can happen again. To say that Bach was ignored because his work was not published, and, therefore, unknown to most people, is a most childish argument. Why was it unpublished? Because it was not liked.

Then again, in his enumeration of composers who, he says, are wrongly supposed to have been neglected, Mr. Newman omits to consider Schubert. Presumably he forgot about him; if so, Mr. Newman has a very convenient memory, for Schubert is probably the best example it would be possible to find of a great artist who had no recognition during his lifetime, and died in the utmost poverty. No doubt Mr. Newman could bring forward reasons for this too. He might say that as there is evidence that Schubert occasionally drank too much, it was probably his own fault. The fact remains that his contemporaries conspicuously failed to recognise his greatness.

Before two such glaring examples, Mr. Newman's thesis falls to the ground completely. But there is a further consideration

## NOTES ON MUSIC

which renders his position untenable—the fact that he confines his enquiry to music. Being a man of culture, he knows perfectly well that if he were to apply his theory to art and literature, it could not be seriously considered for a moment. He must be well aware of the fact that Cézanne, Gauguin, and van Gogh, the three greatest masters of painting of the last generation, were not merely ignored, but derided by literally all but two or three amongst their contemporaries. Painting may be a different thing from music, but not so different that what is possible in the one is impossible in the other, or even improbable. And when we consider how much easier it is to understand a picture than a piece of music, because the former is a complete work of art in itself, while the score of a complicated orchestral work can only be judged by an exceptionally gifted musician, it is evident that there is infinitely more likelihood of a painting being recognised as a masterpiece by the average man than a piece of music.

The reason why examples of neglected genius are rarer in music than in the other arts is to be found in the fact that for the last two hundred years music has developed and progressed in a single direction, in accordance with a definite unified tradition. It is generally when a great artist goes in a different direction from that of his predecessors and contemporaries that he is most liable to encounter indifference or neglect, like an imaginative artist such as William Blake in an age of rationalism, like any composer of to-day who turns his back on the ever-growing sensationalism of modern music. Those who express their age, whether great like Beethoven, or insignificant like Steibelt, will generally meet with appreciation. This much of Mr. Newman's theory will stand; the rest is demonstrably contrary to all established facts.

But Mr. Newman carries his theory one step further, asserting that a great composer's contemporaries are far more capable of seeing him steadily and seeing him whole than posterity, which is prejudiced in his favour, and apt to see only his virtues and to excuse or ignore his defects. Not satisfied with the small grain of truth which is to be found in this contention, he goes so far as to say that contemporary abuse of a great artist is nearly always justified. In a passage of the most astonishing pedantry and perversity, he analyses the adverse criticisms brought against Mozart by a contemporary musician called Sarti. After quoting remarks of the latter, such as "From these two fragments we can decide that the composer, whom I do not know and do not wish to know, is only a clavier player with a depraved ear," and that "I would say with the immortal Rousseau, *de la musique à faire boucher les oreilles*," Mr. Newman comes to the startling conclusion that "Sarti turns out to have been mostly right and Mozart wrong."

Finally, he takes up a position on exceedingly slippery ground when he asserts dogmatically that the great masters are never great innovators or experimenters in technical matters; that they

## THE CALENDAR

generally accept unquestioningly the idioms and conventions current in their time, while it is only the men of lesser stature that seek for new means of expression. The answer to this assertion involves definitions ; firstly, of what he considers to be an artist of the first rank. If he regards Berlioz, Liszt or Chopin as a great master, then his statement is obviously untrue ; secondly, of what he means by experiment, for all great composers have contributed to some degree to the development and extension of current idioms. But probably by the word "experiment" Mr. Newman really means to imply unsuccessful experiment ; for it is generally only when it is unsuccessful that we allude to it at all. Successful experiments, on the other hand, are to be found in every great work, for a work is largely great, though admittedly not wholly, on account of those things in it which have never been done before.

The whole book is full of such reckless assertions. Coming from anyone else, one would hardly take the trouble to attempt to refute them, but Mr. Newman's position in the musical world is such a powerful and influential one that they are liable to do a great deal of harm. One suspects that they are not always meant to be taken seriously ; that they are to a great extent the outcome of a very natural and pardonable reaction against the insufferable pretensions of a small clique of aesthetic snobs who take *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, and regard any work which appeals to more than a chosen few as being necessarily inferior. But the fact that the later works of Stravinsky only appeal to a few congenital idiots should not lead us to the conclusion that no work can be of ultimate value which does not at once appeal to that pure abstraction which Mr. Newman calls the average intelligent music-lover. Why is he to be the sole judge, any more than Tolstoi's man-in-the-street ? And does Mr. Newman really believe that Beethoven's posthumous string quartets justified themselves at once, aesthetically, to the average musical sense of his period ? He must know perfectly well that they did not, that even to-day only a very small proportion of the music-loving public is capable of entering into them and appreciating them. The vast majority of Mr. Newman's "cultivated musicians and music-lovers" find a great work like the Grosse Fugue in B flat Op. 133 completely unintelligible ; for a few individuals in every generation it is one of the greatest things in all music. Such works as these posthumous quartets can never be popular, for they demand a degree of imaginative and intellectual insight which are exceedingly rare.

The fact of the matter is that Mr. Newman's justifiable distaste for certain recent developments in modern music has led him into making statements which, if they are listened to and taken seriously, can only have disastrous consequences, by encouraging the already pronounced apathy and intolerance with which the musical public is apt to regard any work which is not immediately comprehensible or referable to precedent.

## Reviews.

### Our Philosophers.

By J. W. N. SULLIVAN.

DÆDALUS, OR SCIENCE AND THE FUTURE. By J. B. S. HALDANE.

ICARUS, OR THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE. By BERTRAND RUSSELL.

TANTALUS, OR THE FUTURE OF MAN. By F. C. S. SCHILLER.  
Published by Kegan Paul at 2s. 6d. net each in their "To-Day and To-Morrow" Series.

The great attraction of the old-fashioned way of writing philosophy was that it gave us a survey of things in general as seen by one individual mind. Philosophical systems, like works of art, revealed their authors clearly and abundantly. This was of great advantage in helping us to judge the value of the philosopher's remarks, for the human tendency to sum a man up and, on the strength of that summation, to discount his arguments, is perfectly sound. Any philosopher worth his salt, as one of our finest logicians has said, can be logically impeccable. Nevertheless there are logically impeccable theories that do not survive a meeting with their authors. We feel that truth may declare itself through strange instruments, but not through instruments as strange as these. It is probable that the chief element in this "summing-up" process is a judgment as to the subject's sensitiveness. How often do we have occasion to surmise, in writings on æsthetics, for example, that the author cannot tell good from bad in works of art! This absolves us from agonising over his logic, since we pass the preliminary judgment that he does not know what he is talking about. This is the chief objection to the published psycho-analytic explanations of poetry. Most of the rationalistic explanations of mysticism impress even one who is not a mystic as suffering from the same defect. But there is a tendency amongst modern philosophers to become specialists, to make their questions definite, and to search for definite answers. This means that we have very largely to forgo the great advantage of summing the philosopher up. He is becoming almost as anonymous as the man of science. Since philosophy has not yet reached the objectivity of science, but is still chiefly an expression of the temperament of the philosopher, this anonymity is a real difficulty in judging the philosophy. Fortunately philosophers lecture frequently, and one can sometimes meet them at dinner.



## THE CALENDAR

It is this interest in making contact with the *whole* of a mind which is partly responsible, we are convinced, for the popularity of the "To-Day and To-Morrow Series." For the scheme of these small books appears to be for each author to select such a subject as will enable him to express his ideas on things in general. Not fully, of course. It is only incidentally that we learn Mr. Haldane's literary tastes, or that Mr. Russell loves life. But the authors, whether by way of prophecy, or by rambling over some large and indefinite subject such as Intelligence, perform the highly interesting and valuable function of "giving themselves away" pretty thoroughly.

The first and most famous book of the series is the "Dædalus" of Mr. Haldane. We have here a complete picture of the romantic biologist, the man who sees most human institutions and ideals as dependent on science, and chiefly on biological science. We have been prepared for this general outlook by the practical applications of physical science. We can easily agree that the world has become very different with the invention of fast transport, the telephone, the telegraph, and wireless. But it is customary to assume that such inventions leave human nature unchanged. Mr. Haldane believes that biological inventions will change not only the external manifestations of human nature, but human nature itself. A powerful group of our emotions depends, for instance, on the family; another group has its present form because sexual love is inextricably bound up with the instinct of propagation. But Mr. Haldane believes that in the near future babies will be grown in laboratories. Human beings will continue, of course, to supply the ovum and the spermatozoon, but the rest of the process will be carried out in bottles. Very fine children will result in this way, for only the best men and women will be selected to undergo the necessary operations. We can see at once that family life will be profoundly modified. Most people will have no children; other people will have hundreds. But even the people with hundreds will not have a family. No mother could attend to such a progeny. It is obvious that, on emerging from the bottle, the children must be placed in public institutions where, by the use of drugs and the wise stimulation of the ductless glands, they can be provided with such characteristics as we think desirable. The only flaw in this scheme for modifying human nature is, it seems to us, that human nature must have been profoundly modified before the scheme could be carried through. In this connection we attach great importance to votes for women. Men have a tendency, we agree, to do a thing simply because it can be done. An apparatus can be made which enables millions of people thousands of miles away to hear the speeches of an American senator. Men promptly proceed to construct the apparatus. But women are not like that. The fact that ectogenetic babies can be grown will not seem to women a reason for growing them. A woman is not comforted for a sterile

## REVIEWS

life by the vision of a planet filled with children belonging to nobody in particular, even if they be drugged to the highest point of efficiency. She wants children of her own. Mr. Haldane, intoxicated by his own glorious vision, has overrated the enthusiasm of women for scientific research. There are even men who would hesitate to lend themselves to this fish-spawn method of procreation.

But, while we may disagree with Mr. Haldane's actual prophecies, we are particularly interested in the general outlook on life from which they spring. He reminds us of H. G. Wells in his sense of the fluidity of life, in his denial of limits to change. Material conditions and man himself may change out of all recognition—the only thing remaining constant being man's passion for scientific research. There is certainly something exciting, if a little bewildering, in this picture of perpetual progress towards ideals which perpetually change. "We have advanced from the gorilla to man," said Kirrilov, "and will advance from man—," "To the gorilla," suggested Stavrogin. Who knows what may happen in a world of limitless change? As we should expect, Mr. Haldane does not share what is still the philosophy of the average scientific man, namely, Victorian materialism. He thinks that, with the advent of relativity theory, we are in for a period of Kantian idealism, to be followed by something like Bergsonian activism. These are certainly philosophies which go better with the sense of adventure than does the hypothesis that we are the outcome of the random movements of little billiard balls. In the present state of the human consciousness, when we are even doubtful whether a man can ask himself genuine questions in philosophy at all, a philosophy must be regarded as a device for enabling us to indulge our favourite emotions. That Mr. Haldane is not a materialist, therefore, means that he is sanguine.

Mr. Bertrand Russell is not sanguine, as his "Icarus" is sufficient to show, and it is true that he was once a materialist. It is not possible to say that he is one now for any careful modern exposition of the materialist doctrine points out that it must be understood in the sense in which Mrs. Wilfer used the term "attractions," "with the qualification that I do not mean it in any way whatever." For we cannot adopt the old view that matter causes mind if we remember the new doctrine that both mind and matter are logical fictions. For since logical fictions are presumably invented by the mind we should be saying that the mind invented itself as well as the matter that caused it. But, so far as the effect on feeling is concerned, what Mr. Russell does believe seems to come to very much the same thing. For he believes that our thoughts obey the laws of physics, which there is some reason to believe are merely the laws of chance, and he believes that our minds depend on our brains in the sense that when our brains are disorganised we simply cease to exist. This is very much the same as the "accidental collocations of atoms" theory, and the old attitude of

## THE CALENDAR

"unyielding despair" would still seem to be the right reaction to it. And there is plenty of despair in "Icarus." Mr. Russell does not regard the advance of science as changing human nature. Science gives more power to men, but how they use this power depends upon their purposes. Mr. Russell shows that their purposes are quite as likely to be bad as good. It is quite true that people in power seldom seem to desire the good, and it may be that in that they are faithfully reflecting the ideals of the mass of their countrymen. But if they are not, then we may hope that humbug will grow more difficult. It is significant that politics, however cynical in fact, cannot afford to be cynical in theory. It is not so much the bad hearts as the weak heads of the people which are taken advantage of. But we agree that, judging from the correspondence columns of our newspapers, the heads are very weak, and accordingly the prospect is not hopeful.

Dr. Schiller's book deals chiefly with eugenics, of which he is an ardent advocate. But he does not deal with a powerful objection to eugenics as an immediately practical scheme, which is that we have no satisfactory criteria for inherently bad and inherently good stocks. There are passages in this book which lead one to believe that Dr. Schiller thinks well-off people inherently better than poor people. Most eugenists seem to be of this opinion. But they give no evidence in support of it, except their amazing statistics showing that undernourished and ignorant people bred in slums seldom become Cabinet Ministers, and that their acquisitive instinct, being badly trained, lands them in prison more often than it lands them at the head of an oil combine. Before we apply eugenics let us alter the social system and give all the stocks an equal chance. This is the obvious thing to do if eugenics is to have any scientific basis at all. And Dr. Schiller himself mentions another scheme which, if it could be carried through, might still the alarm of the eugenists. That scheme is to create a genuine science of psychology and use its findings in education. Some day a man with as much sympathetic understanding of his fellow men as a good novelist possesses may take up the study of psychology. At present, as Dr. Schiller says, psychologists ape the methods and terminology of the "exact" sciences without having any grounds for supposing that this technique is appropriate to their subject matter.

With the other books in the series we have not space to deal, but we think that the reader who buys any one of them is likely to go on and buy the others.

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## REVIEWS

DIALOGUES IN LIMBO. By GEORGE SANTAYANA. (Constable, 10s. 6d.)

Mr. Santayana is distinguished, accomplished, serious. He states his attitudes weightily, yet he is seldom portentously weighty ; he has all the dignity of a sceptic who in questioning things questions also the importance of his own responses. Yet when he questions he is always serious, and he waits for an answer knowing that it will not give him the final satisfaction he desires. Certain things he holds to, though not absolutely : that truth is preferable to illusion ; that it is our duty to discover truth where and when we can, however much it may injure our vanity ; that it is childish to expect the universe to respond to our sighs and our wishes. If what he calls truth and illusion and the universe appear a little old-fashioned to us now, it is not because his response to these concepts is false or belongs to a past age, but because it is limited. Mr. Santayana embodies an attitude to these things which in other terms has often been embodied in the past. It is an attitude which in discarding all the trappings of heroism is all the more heroic. Its validity we recognise not with the intellect but with the heart, the will and the character ; it is valid in the end because it is a spiritually practicable way of life as well as an intellectual construction. Mr. Santayana's ideas derive their admirable weight from the fact that we feel he lives by them, and on the whole wisely. To say all this is to say that his writings are not in any exact sense philosophy ; they are more strictly writings with a specific moral purpose, and more distinctly still an antidote to most of the things we learn erroneously and should unlearn. He belongs to the same category in thought as Nietzsche, Richter, Carlyle, and Emerson ; his criticism of life is partly imaginative and partly moral. Like Nietzsche, he is, in a sense, a poet *manqué* ; we can see how much more effective his ideas would be if they were suddenly to be released in tragic poetry. That is where they should be ; yet in failing to set them there, Mr. Santayana has enriched a rare and inspiring province of literature. The truth of that literature is never what it pretends to be, philosophical : it is the truth of poetry. It is not demonstrable and it does not use exact terms ; but the response it awakens in us increases our imaginative grasp and makes us more harmonious.

It is by comparison with imaginative thinkers such as Nietzsche and Emerson that Mr. Santayana is to be judged. He is inferior to none in comprehensiveness of conception and integrity of thought ; he is always concerned with great themes, and in general plan his thought is adequate. He fulfils the first function of this peculiar order of literature, which is to demonstrate that mankind is concerned with great problems, and to clarify these and make them attractive. Where he falls short of a great writer like Nietzsche is in intensity and intimacy of thought. His general plan is more just than Nietzsche's and is true to a greater variety of human



## THE CALENDAR

experience ; but his particular applications are infinitely less exact, illuminating and rich. On any question the majority would probably agree with the author of "Dialogues in Limbo" ; but whether they agreed or not they would find themselves after reading Nietzsche with their experience immensely enriched, their understanding of themselves and the world vastly deepened. They would be stimulated by contact with a great imagination. It is in imagination that Mr. Santayana is weakest. He is not unlike his own Democritus whom "science has accustomed to look away from appearance and to consider only the causes of appearance." His general observations do not grip upon those particular manifestations of life which we all know and can all recognise, as Nietzsche's did, and in a lesser degree Emerson's. The result is that the texture of his thought, in being consistently too general, is a little thin. The ardour and the roughness of life are not in it, and in the absence of these Mr. Santayana has to fall back on eloquence. He is a very rhetorical writer ; Democritus' succession of defences of truth in the first five dialogues are pure rhetoric. It is incredible that anyone should write at this time of day a set defence of truth ; yet we do not feel incredulous while we read. The rhetoric is effective because it is genuine ; for in defending truth Mr. Santayana is defending an attitude which has been tested and approved in practice. His eloquence is that of a man who believes with more than fanaticism—with firmness—in the cause he defends ; and if this eloquence is less excellent than imaginative demonstration and affects us less immediately, it does affect us, because it is of its kind authentic.

The objects on which eloquence is exercised are always and must always be simple ; and reduced to their elements the questions Mr. Santayana raises and the attitudes he defends are banal. To posit the life of the atoms against the life of appearance without particularising these in a host of examples would be to fall into mere platitude if the writer did not possess the very intense and half-unconscious feeling towards them which manifests itself in eloquence. Nietzsche has said that certain poets have achieved a curious beauty by expressing their hopeless longing towards the object rather than their realisation of it. Mr. Santayana's distinction of writing has its origin, one feels, in a longing for a particularity which always eludes it. Certainly he writes more "beautifully" about images than any imaginative writer could who has to handle them and knows their contrariety as well as their beauty. A poet would scarcely say : "I too must see colours in the flowers and must hear the sweet warbling of the fountain or the flute." Nor would he add : "But when I see them I mock them, and when I hear them I remember faithfully the true causes of sound." When images come they do not come in this shape, nor can they be treated in this fashion. Here everything is infinitely remote ; we seem to be seeing the shadows of images and participating in the echo

## REVIEWS

of a renunciation. It is this curious remoteness, this pathos of distance never overleapt, that gives Mr. Santayana's prose its strange distinction and, if we are to judge from these two sentences, its occasional falsity. But if his atoms become now and then intellectually immaterial and his appearances the shadows of appearance, his feelings towards them, his attitude to a world unrealised, is genuine, integral, and such as would be tenable if adapted to the world as it is.

EDWIN MUIR.

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### Verse.

THE SIRENS. An Ode by LAURENCE BINYON. Macmillan. 5s.  
THE TORCH-BEARERS. (Vol. 2.) By ALFRED NOYES.  
Blackwood. 7s. 6d.

The failure of either of these books to make any strong impression is linked up with certain ideas which we have found to be in the air about the audience for modern poetry, and also, and in particular, since each has an heroic theme, with our suggestions as to the qualifications necessary to the modern hero.

As to the audience first. There are, I know, certain groups which respond to these works as fully as they respond to "Prometheus Unbound." There is also a smaller group which must be sensible that Mr. Binyon's faculty for manipulating words and rhythms is superior to that of Mr. Noyes. Here and there are individuals like ourselves who do not find in these poems the satisfaction they get from classic poetry, or the sympathy with common pre-occupations which they feel in much now-obscure modern verse. There may be technical objections to be made to these poems, but it will only come from the quarter where the response was faint in the first place. Technical criticism can never gain a clear verdict; the case is to a great extent prejudged when we call in the expert, our technical knowledge, to find reasons for the condemnation. As each group reacts to the poem as a whole, it will find the technique proportionately adequate or not.

Humanity is in each case the Hero of these poems: to Mr. Noyes the Seeker after Truth; to Mr. Binyon, less specifically, the Adventurer. Destiny the background, History the foreground. Mr. Noyes has a simple narrative scheme in which men of science pass the torch of knowledge from hand to hand. Really, of course, it is no narrative, because there is no end, no aim, and no form therefore. It is the negation of art, like Creative Evolution: a simple getting infinitely better, with one naive moral idea behind it. Mr. Noyes is a social asset; but in a well-regulated state he would have been made a lower-form master, for his conception of the nobility of purpose is simple enough to be intelligible only to the

## THE CALENDAR

uncorrupted. Even considered as a versification of the "Heroes of Science" series which used to be given as school-prizes, the result does not seem to justify the labour. The poem does not communicate knowledge, at least no more than is contained in any shilling manual, nor initiate to any experience, except to the vague glamour of "discovering truth," which is the stock-in-trade of every hagiographer of science. These torch-bearers are allotted the most insignificant experiences. Of the particular sensuous experience which individualises the poet's idiom and demands fresh metaphors, there is no glimmer.

A few gleanings:

Shone like a dream in the Eternal mind.

. . . black

As night . . .

like the foundered spars  
Of lost Atlantis.

The dawn-wind, like a host of spirits,

A bird cried, once, a sharp ecstatic cry  
As if it saw an angel.

Blind throats . . .

If "science" had really meant anything, poetically, to Mr. Noyes, it would have altered his universe; would have created metaphors. As it is, he sails his pretentious kite with rags of literature and superstition in its tail.

To drag Mr. Noyes out of his group in this way is unfair; he loses all his beauty, like a fish on the bank. It was necessary though, in order to show the unimportance of this sort of connection between poetry and knowledge. The hues and graces of "The Sirens" will also suffer from similar treatment, but we have only to put these poems back in their village pond and they will regain their natural freshness. What we are showing is simply this, that the "knowledge" of any period is as much a reflection of its sensibility as its poetry, and its poetry will share and show the qualities and consequences of its knowledge, so far as it is alive, and of any other outstanding and common experience, such as the war. Poetry will deal with it in such a way as, generally, to avoid factual references, and the reader will take up these references unconsciously; the texture, idiom, rhythm, and imagery of the verse all helping, and all dating. Mr. Turner's "In Time Like Glass" succeeds Einstein as obviously as "The Waste Land" succeeds Sir James Frazer.

Dating helps to explain our group-system. Mr. Noyes and his audience are roughly 1880 minds, Mr. Binyon and his about 1900.

## REVIEWS

We base these figures not on the facts referred to in the subject of the poem—there are none in Mr. Binyon's poem—but to the way in which the poet approaches the Universe—by his sensibility to heroism. Mr. Binyon is all on ; he is a straight backer. It is characteristic of the contemporary poet to put his money on each way. I mean that irony has come back to the attitude ; it is the opportunism of the dis-inherited. For Mr. Binyon, however, Man, the mediæval Son of God, is still in possession of the universe ; he, of course, admits the evil of industrialism,

“Hark to the hammers endlessly hammering ”

and the sirens who lure our animal nature—

“Eternal woman, wonderful, with a bosom

Heaved as with love, and with warm, white eyelids

Over eyes cruel and young,”

but the doubt is transcended in a realisation of our supra-terrestrial destiny.

Can a poem with such a theme claim to be a contemporary poem? I would say that is possible, since such an emotional constitution is by no means rare, but unlikely because the more vital people, including the poets, do not see in the universe at present the material for such a structure. If such a poem were to be written, the terms of reference would all have to be re-created, and the result would, no doubt, be very obscure and unfamiliar, and it would have to wait for proper appreciation till our generation, too, were out of the way. There is, however, no sign of such a re-creative faculty in Mr. Binyon. We can follow all his references as fast as he can make them. That is to say, there is no sign of his having apprehended any non-literary experience, no sign of contemporary speech in his idiom, or of contemporary life in his imagery. His foundry scene in the lurid Brangwyn manner refers us back to wine-vats and Titans. When he would rise to rhapsody, it becomes apparent that Mr. Binyon possesses an emotive sensibility to words, not the sensuous appreciation common to the articulate poet. To Mr. Binyon words mean states of soul, not things or sensations. Hence his use of the general term (essential to lyric poetry, of course, but not in such archaic suits, its secondary or tertiary derivation) prevents the mind from being stimulated through the senses. The eye slides over the metaphors and perceives them no more than the books on a familiar shelf ; or accepts them dutifully like the promises in a politician's election campaign. This style, indeed, is the journalese of poetry, a real decadence. In this phase of a poetic convention, words are no longer used to define objects, to circumscribe and make palpable a sensation, to direct the maximum tensivity to a point, but to diffuse an emotional prejudice over the largest possible area. The language of “The Sirens” is representative of much that is accepted as poetry at present, a parasitic growth supporting its brief existence with the sap of earlier aspirations. It is so like the language of poetry that the unsophisticated



are deceived. The emotional associations of the vocabulary are so strong that it does actually produce an effect ; that is why we cannot refuse "The Sirens" the title of poem. To-day, to a number of people, it is one, but as its effects are derived from a series of rapidly dissolving combinations, the chances of its surviving long enough to be called a modern poem are very few. And a poem which was never modern will not pass into that curious state of suspended animation by means of which the poems we call classic are preserved active to the palate.

E. R.

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**BRING ! BRING !** By CONRAD AIKEN. Secker. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Aiken writes well, he has an admirable command of phrase, he knows how a story should, and should not be written, and he is aware—like most cultured Americans, indeed, rather over-aware—of most matters of contemporary importance ; in a word, he is highly intelligent, a quality rare enough in contemporary fiction to afford at least a negative pleasure. The better stories in this volume have, in fact, every merit but that of dramatic significance ; in other respects, they are as excellent as work can well be in the absence of any specific talent for his medium in the author. Mr. Aiken has had an adequate psychological education, and the majority of his stories are variations, implicit and explicit, on psycho-analytical themes. That they are for the most part unsuccessful is due neither to the choice of theme, nor, entirely, to its method of treatment, but to the fact that, while Mr. Aiken's critical ability is sufficient to tell him in what way his material should be conceived to acquire aesthetic significance, his natural talent is incompetent, or unsuited, to realise his critical perceptions. This is the better side of the matter. In the two or three cases where Mr. Aiken's execution is only too adequate to his conception, both are equally spurious. "The Disciple," a psychological study in the occult written in Henry Jamesese, which, the advertisement informs us, won the prize in a recent competition in *Harper's Magazine*, may have been included as a matter of policy. But there are several only less worthless stories, where the author succumbs to his innate taste for a flacid symbolism with Henry James decorations, a taste that may explain his failure, even in the more interesting stories, to give aesthetic validity to his psychological pre-occupations. "The Letter," "The Last Visit," and "Bring ! Bring !" could only have been written by a person of exceptional intelligence ; they have knowledge, style, capacity, everything but artistic significance. American conditions do not appear to favour the conjunction of a strong critical intelligence with creative capacity. "Winesburg, Ohio" has precisely what Mr. Aiken's volume lacks, and nothing it possesses ; and while a certain apparent

## REVIEWS

stupidity is essential to Mr. Anderson's talent, it is carried to a degree unimaginable outside America in a man of equal gifts.

The choice of subject of both writers, however, is the same, which may suggest that Whitman and James did not continue indefinitely side by side in American literature, resident respectively at home and in Europe.

J. F. H.

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We regret the following errors in "The Visitation of the Hero," by Bertram Higgins (August, pp. 434-5) :

Line	23	for	being	read	beings
"	27	"	herbs	"	herds
"	28	"	dusty	"	dusky
"	28	"	printless	"	tintless
"	30	"	cable	"	table
"	36	"	Who loathe	"	Who, loath
"	37	"	then	"	them
"	49	"	restoration	"	respiration
"	59	"	to three	"	to the three
"	68	"	fixed	"	thick

## Among New Books

BEN JONSON. Edited by C. H. HERFORD and PERCY SIMPSON. Vols. I and II. *The Man and His Work.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 42s.)

The first two volumes of the ten which will make up this fine edition of Jonson consist chiefly of biographical and editorial matter. The first volume contains a concise biography, transcripts of all the extant documents relating to Jonson, the most important of all, of course, being the conversations with Drummond, Jonson's Letters, including one or two recently discovered, and a list of books known to have been in his library. The rest of the first volume and the whole of the second are taken up with introductions to the separate plays, to the Masques and to the Poems. Other critical annotations will accompany the plays themselves.

Whether this plan of separating one part of the critical apparatus of the play from another part is a good one we cannot tell till we have seen the text itself. It will necessitate a lot of referring back which might have been avoided. It also provides the excuse for a good deal of interpretative criticism which would seem to be unnecessary in a production of this kind, the purpose of which is to establish the text once and for all; an object which we do not doubt will be attained.

A guarded appreciation would seem to be the general response to the genius of Jonson, as to that of Swift. We smooth our ruffled feathers with cant about his joviality, his capacity for sack and his so-typically English honesty, "he would not flatter, though he died for it." The essential, demoniacal Jonson is a difficult guest to entertain, as Drummond found, but we know of none whose re-incarnation would be more beneficial to the present age.

Jonson's Masques are not easily accessible. The editors provide us with an interesting introduction to this part of Jonson's work, and we shall expect to find its qualities more generally appreciated after the appearance of the text. The reproductions of some hitherto unpublished designs for the scenery and costumes of the masques, by Inigo Jones, are particularly charming, and remind us what an interesting, and potentially high, art form we have lost. Possibly revue may be considered a revival of the masque, and its very low level of interest may be accounted for by the difference between the aristocratic and democratic audiences, or to the democratisation of the taste of the aristocracy. Thanks to the Russian influence, the dance has not by any means degenerated, as poetry has done. It might yet be possible, by careful fostering, to associate poetry with the three other arts, and relieve the domestic drama of its losing struggle with the film.

THE SCOURGE OF VILLAIN, 1599. JOHN MARSTON. Lane. 3s.

This is an addition to the Bodley Head Quartos which touches some of the most interesting points in later Elizabethan literature. In the first place it is one of the most famous manifestations of the new character satire took on in the last decade of the 16th century, as in Donne and Hall. Though there seems little relationship between the satire of Marston and of Pope, we can yet realise that the one is a refinement of the same strain if we see them both in opposition to Skelton, representing the pure English tradition. The cause of the change is pretty clearly the fashionable taste for Persius, as far as style goes; the psychological cause is touched on in Mr. Harrison's very interesting introduction.

A second point of interest is Marston's quarrel with Jonson, and another his long and vigorous satire on the "Humours," which is particularly valuable as a contemporary guide to the significance attached to this theory of behaviour. In a note Mr. Harrison very ingeniously traces a connection between Marston and Jacques in "As You Like It." Marston's satire is still



## AMONG NEW BOOKS

interesting, and the book, with its self-explanatory poems, its remarks to the "peruser," its dedication "to his most esteemed and best beloved self," and the surrender "To everlasting Oblivion," are marks of a puzzling and uncommon character. Too much of his verse seems to rely on the strength of simple indignation, issuing in very general abuse. It is needless to say that he lacks those sudden particular flashes which break from Donne's satire, but his smudgy, scattered portraits do sometimes take on a recognisable face. No doubt we could all find an original for Friscus, though Proust, Laforgue, and Paul Valéry are more likely to be in his mouth than the Latins:

Then straight comes Friscus, that neat gentleman  
That new discarded Academien,  
Who, for he could cry *Ergo* in the school,  
Straightway with his huge judgment dares controle  
Whatso'er he views, "That's pretty, pretty good,  
That epithet hath not that sprightly blood  
That should enforce it speak, that's Persius vein  
That's Juvenal's, here's Horace crabbed strain,"  
Though he ne'er read one line in Juvenal,  
Or in his life his lazie eye let fall  
On dusky Persius. O indignity  
To my respectless free-bred poesie.

A DEFENCE OF RYME, by SAMUEL DANIEL, and OBSERVATIONS IN THE ART OF ENGLISH POESIE, by THOMAS CAMPION. (Bodley Head Quartos XIV., 3s.)

*A Defence of Ryme* was published in 1603 as an answer to Campion's pamphlet in which, the year before, he had attempted to submit English verse to the prosodical rules of the Greeks and Romans. Though his intention was in some ways the same as Gabriel Hervey's, his method differed. He was particularly concerned with lyrical poetry, regretting "the vulgar and unartificiall custome of riming," which, however, he himself used so aptly. His attempt is interesting, but fails, like later ones, through our inability to define strictly enough the quantities to be observed in English; the license which he admits being more important than the rules he would impose. The experiments of his own which he prints are well worth attention. Daniel took him up on the question of rhyme. His reply has the initial advantage of being on the right side, but intrinsically it is of little importance. He contents himself with asserting the falseness of Campion's suggestion, for little better reason than the popular one, that it is safer to continue in a practice which has shown good results than to risk one which is contrary to fashion. The tone of his essay is very much like that of our respectable weekly literary articles: his ally is the mass of traditional opinion, his enemy innovation. The book is a useful addition to the Bodley Head Quartos, though there seems no reason for printing the two essays out of chronological order.

THE AUGUSTAN BOOKS OF MODERN POETRY. BENN. 6d. each.  
Robert Bridges. Hilaire Belloc. Rupert Brooke. Edmund Blunden.  
Rabindranath Tagore.

We should be very glad to believe the publication of this series an indication of a contemporary interest in poetry, and especially in the poetry of living men. We must remember, though, that the enterprise is as much a test of modern poetry as of the public taste. Its success depends on the existence of good poets, on the editor's choice of good poets, and on the popular conformity to the idea of goodness set before them. It is too early to comment on the selection as we do not know the scope of the series; but the first batch shows evident caution, except for the inclusion of R. Tagore, which was ill-advised, we think, as poetry is so essentially bound up with language. Some instruction, perhaps, but little else is to be got from the ordinary translation.



## THE CALENDAR

Side by side with this series is another, "The Augustan Books of English Poetry," issued in the same pleasant format at the same admirable price. The first two numbers contain selections from Keats and Shelley. Here again enterprise, and *anticipation*, not supplying a taste but creating one, is demanded of whoever is responsible for the choice. A poet can be too familiar, especially if he diverts attention from those more difficult of access. Donne, Marvell, and Skelton, to name only three, are poets who we hope will not be sacrificed to the lesser romantics or the classic giants. The result of this venture will be watched anxiously by all those who are trying to gauge the public attitude to poetry.

THAMYRIS, OR IS THERE A FUTURE FOR POETRY? By R. C. TREVELYAN. Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d. net.

Mr. Trevelyan proposes the questions "Has the history of poetry been merely a deplorable tale of decadence, a progressive impoverishment and deterioration, through senility and second childishness, towards an unlamented death in a bastard and graceless prose? Or, on the contrary, has the gradual divorce of poetry from music and intoning meant its liberation for subtler and more rational, but no less truly poetical purposes?" Before attempting answers, he undertakes a survey of the historical facts that, cursory and dogmatic as the limitations of space compel it to be, is undoubtedly accurate in the main. Mr. Trevelyan points out that the poems of classical antiquity and the *Chansons de Geste* were intended for performance to music or for intonation, that "ancient poetry was in an obvious and literal sense an incantation, at once charming and exciting the mind through the ear." Obviously the modern poet, faced with the tyrannous domination of modern music, is restricted to the medium of spoken verse. Consequently, Mr. Trevelyan's enquiry resolves into an attempt to elucidate the essential qualities of this medium. He concludes that the rhythmical framework of verse must be definite and constant.

Undoubtedly the function of metre depends on some sense analogous to that of musical "time." Whether this sense is satisfied by a prosody based on a system of syllable-counting or by one based on stress-recurrence is unimportant theoretically, provided that it is satisfied. Mr. Trevelyan thinks the latter system more suitable to the dramatic or lyrical poet requiring a free rhythmical structure and that the former is the appropriate instrument for undramatic verse and for meditative lyrical poetry. And he suggests that modern poets who are shut out of the commercial stage, or when rarely admitted compelled to submit to the barbarous travesty of their work by mal-trained elocutionists, should attempt to gain readers' as distinguished from audiences' ears by experiments in syllabic verse. There is certainly the precedent of Keats, who turned to Dryden for technical inspiration; it is true he found Milton a bad model, but then Milton combined strict syllable-counting with the Shakesporean five-stress iamb. Nevertheless, in the majority of readers, the faculty of instinctive syllable-counting has atrophied; this is no intrinsic objection, but practically it would have to be considered, as is shown by the misapprehension of a recent poem by the Poet Laureate.

More essays like Mr. Trevelyan's would be welcome, for poetry needs at present an atmosphere of vigorous technical criticism.